



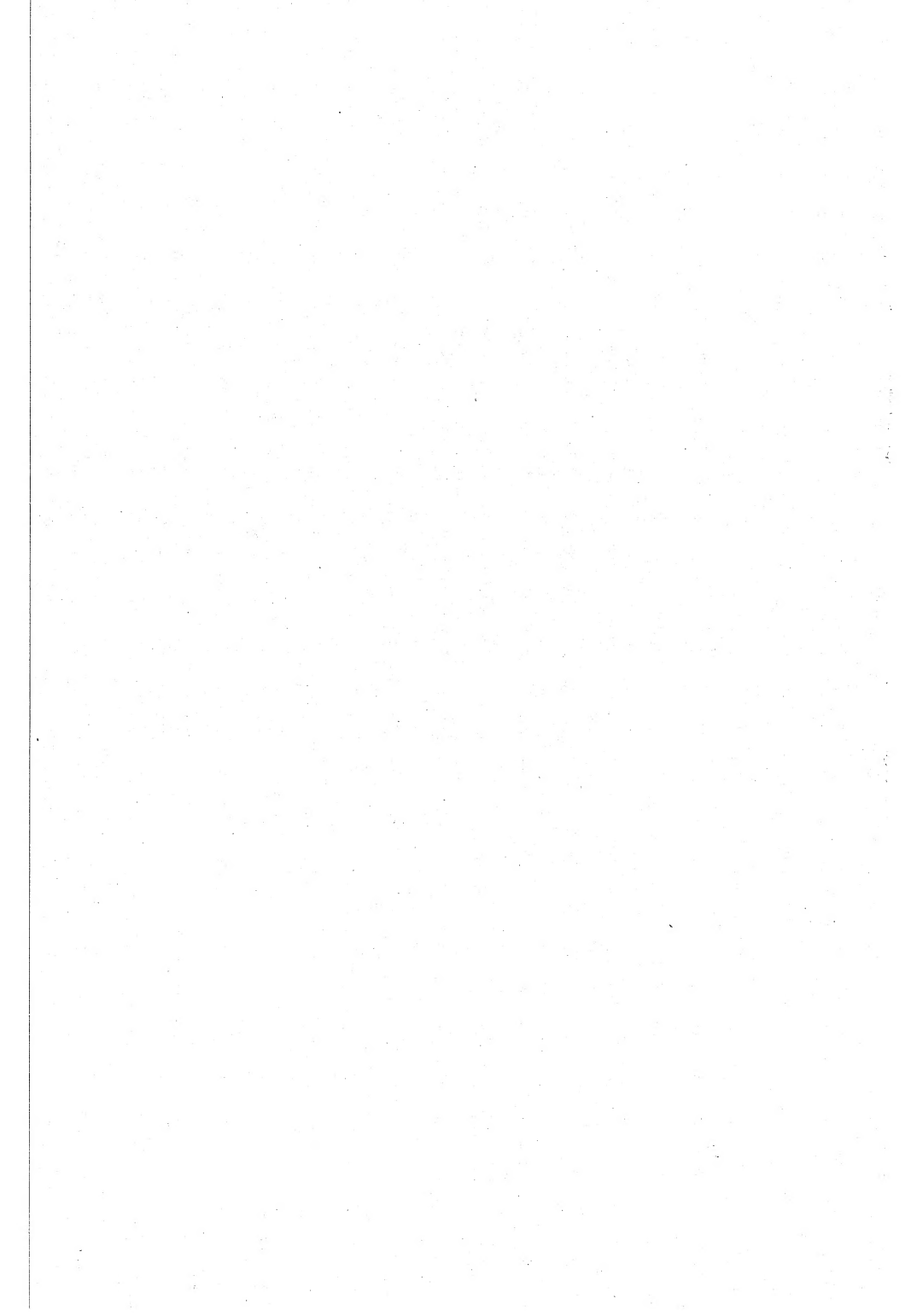
DĀR AS-SUNNAH CLASSIC COLLECTION

INHERITORS OF THE PROPHETS

IBN RAJAB AL-HANBALĪ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (d.795H)

Explanation to the Ḥadīth of the Abū Dardā'

The INHERITORS of the PROPHETS

being a translation of his

Warath al-Anbiyā' sharḥ ḥadīth Abī Dardā'



THE PROPHET (ﷺ) SAID,

“The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets. The Prophets do not leave gold or silver coins to be inherited, rather they leave knowledge, so whoever takes from that has taken an abundant share.”

[AHMAD, *AL-MUSNAD*, 5/196 & ABŪ DĀWŪD, #3641]

Explanation to the Ḥadīth of Abū Dardā'

The Inheritors of the Prophets

by al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū'l-Faraj Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī



Dār as-Sunnah Publishers

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FOREWORD

Everlasting praise belongs to Allāh, the Most High, Who taught man what he knew not. May the peace and blessings be upon the best of creation, the final Prophet sent to Humankind and Jinn, Muhammad (ﷺ) and upon his Household, his Companions and all those who tread the path of guidance until the Last Day.

Know dear reader, may Allāh have Mercy upon you, that Allāh has elevated people with knowledge. Those who inherit sacred knowledge are not equal to those who do not possess such knowledge, nor can they be held as equals. For Allāh, the Most High, said, "Say: Are those who know equal with those who know not?" [*al-Zumar*, (39): 9]

This ayah of the Qur'ān is rhetorical and poses a question in a negative form; that one cannot be equal to those who have something as special as knowledge of the religion unless they too strive to seek it. Wealth and high worldly status are not comparable to religious knowledge.

Know also that knowledge of this world is temporal and limited, while those who possess knowledge and awareness of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, have grasped something that is permanent and a means to eternal salvation. It is therefore incumbent upon every Muslim - both male and female - to seek knowledge, for it enlightens the heart, illuminates the mind, strengthens cognisance of the Creator and nurtures fear and hope in Him.

The scholars of this religion are the inheritors of the Prophets, who keep alive their message. They guide people to the truth and awaken the spirit from slumber and heedlessness. They provide remedial training for the soul and deepen our understanding of

religion. They revive the tradition of the Prophets in the midst of communities. As the importance, relevance and honour given to the scholars wanes inexorably with time, it is ever more necessary to reconnect with them and take from their wisdom and knowledge as they are the authentic link to the Prophetic heritage.

Notably, Muslim communities around the world are suffering from a general absence of traditional Islāmic learning and scholarship. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, “Whomever Allāh wishes well for, He gives them a deep understanding of the religion.” Thus overcoming chaotic curriculum in a confused world. We need to reconnect to the fundamentals of learning knowledge and revive our intellectual heritage for the purpose of wholly embracing Islām and seeking thereby, the pleasure of our Lord and a hope of companionship with the Prophets in the Hereafter.

In this eighth instalment of Dār as-Sunnah’s Ibn Rajab Series, we bring you another truly inspiring work of this illustrious Scholar, may Allāh have mercy upon him. He penned this short book highlighting the virtues and merits of knowledge and its role in transforming an individual. Indeed the cure for ignorance is to traverse the journey upon the well-trodden path in search of sacred knowledge; a path that leads to Paradise. This classical masterpiece will remain a referral guide for many who are intent on joining the ranks of the elite of the Muslims.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all those who helped to make this work see the light of day; from its manuscript stage to its publication. May Allāh bless them all immensely and add this to their scales of good deeds, *Āmīn*.

Abū Muḥammad Tasaddaq

4th Jumada al-Thani 1438 AH | 2nd March 2017

THE AUTHOR

Ḥāfiẓ Abū'l-Faraj ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī

His Name and Lineage

He is the Imām and Ḥāfiẓ, Zaynu'l-Dīn 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Abū-l-Barakāt Mas'ūd al-Sulamī al-Ḥanbalī al-Dimashqī. His agnomen was Abū'l-Faraj, and his nickname was Ibn Rajab, which was the nickname of his grandfather who was born in that Rajab.

His Birth and Upbringing

He was born in Baghdād in 736H and was raised in a pious household that was firmly rooted in knowledge, nobility and righteousness. His grandfather, 'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥasan, was one of the scholars of Baghdād who had a circle in which he would teach students ḥadīth using an ancient method for memorisation. Ibn Rajab would attend these lessons of his grandfather on several occasions even though he was just four-five years of age. As for his father, he was also a scholar and *Muḥaddith*, well-known for his knowledge and virtue.

His Teachers

He learned and took knowledge from the greatest scholars of his time. In Damascus, he studied under:

- Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, studying closely with him until his death in 751H
- Zaynu'l-Dīn al-'Irāqī, ibn an-Naqīb
- Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Khabbāz
- Dāwūd ibn Ibrāhīm al-'Aṭṭār
- Ibn Qāṭī al-Jabal
- Aḥmad ibn 'Abdu-l-Hādī al-Ḥanbalī

In Makkah, he studied under:

- al-Fakhr 'Uthmān ibn Yūsuf al-Nuwayrī

In Jerusalem, he studied under:

- al-Ḥāfiẓ al-'Alā'ī

In Egypt, he studied under:

- Ṣadru'l-Dīn Abū'l-Faḥ al-Maydūmī
- Nāṣiru'l-Dīn ibn al-Mulūk
- and many others.

His Students

Many students of knowledge came to him to study under him. Amongst the most famous of his students were:

- Abū'l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Abū Bakr ibn 'Alī al-Ḥanbalī, known as Ibn al-Risām [d. 884H]
- Abū'l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Naṣr ibn Aḥmad, the *Muftī* of the lands of Egypt [d. 844H]
- Dāwūd ibn Sulaymān al-Mawsilī [d. 844H]
- 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Muqri'

- Zaynū'l-Dīn 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān ibn Sulaymān ibn Abū'l-Karam, well known as Abū Shi'ar;
- Abū Dharr 'Abdu'l-Raḥmān Ibn Muḥammad al-Miṣrī al-Zarkashī[d. 846H]
- al-Qāḍī 'Alā'ū'l-Dīn ibn al-Lahām al-Ba'li [d. 803H], who was the closest of his students to him.
- Aḥmad ibn Ṣayfū'l-Dīn al-Ḥamawī
- and many others.

Ibn Rajab devoted himself to knowledge and spent the vast majority of his time researching, writing, authoring, teaching, and giving legal rulings.

The Scholars Praise for Him

Many scholars praised him for his vast knowledge, asceticism and expertise in the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah said of him, 'He read and became proficient in the various fields of science. He engrossed himself with the issues of the *madhhab* until he mastered it. He devoted himself to the occupation of knowledge of the texts, defects and meanings of the ḥadīth.'¹

Ibn Ḥajr said of him, 'He was highly proficient in the science of ḥadīth in terms of the names of reporters, their biographies, their paths of narration and awareness of their meanings.'²

Ibn Mufliḥ said of him, 'He is the Shaykh, the great scholar, the Ḥāfiẓ, the ascetic, the Shaykh of the Ḥanbalī *madhhab* and he authored many beneficial works.'³

¹ Ibn Qāḍī al-Shuhbah, *Tārikh*, vol. 3, p. 195.

² Ibn Ḥajr, *Inbā'u'l-Ghamr*, vol. 1, p. 460.

His Written Works

He wrote many beneficial works, some of them outstanding such as *al-Qawā'id al-Kubrā fi'l-Furū'* about which it was said, 'It is one of the wonders of this age.'⁴ His commentary to al-Tirmidhī is said to be the most extensive and best ever written so much so that al-'Irāqī, about whom ibn Ḥajr said, 'He was the wonder of his age'; would ask for his help when compiling his own commentary to the same book.

Moreover he has many valuable monographs explaining various aḥādīth such as:

- *Sharḥ Ḥadīth Mā Dhi'bāni Jāi'ān Ursilā fi Ghanam*;
- *Ikhtiyār al-Awlā Sharḥ Ḥadīth Ikhtisām al-Mala' al-A'lā*;
- *Nūr al-Iqtibās fi Sharḥ Waṣiyyah al-Nabī li ibn 'Abbās*;
- *Kashfū'l-Kurbah fi Wasfi Ḥālī Ahli'l-Ghurbah*.
- *al-Dhull wa'l-Inkisār li'l-'Aẓīẓ al-Jabbār*, this book has also been published under the title *al-Khushū' fi'l-Ṣalāh*.
- *Ghayāt al-Nafa' fi Sharḥ Ḥadīth Tamthīl ul-Mu'min bi-Khāmat al-Zarā'*
- *al-Maḥajjah fi Sayri'l-Dulja*

In exegesis his works include:

- *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*;
- *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*;
- *Tafsīr Sūrah al-Naṣr*;
- *I'rāb al-Basmalah*
- *al-Istighnā' bi'l-Qur'ān*.

³ *al-Maqṣad al-Arshad*, vol. 2, p. 81.

⁴ ibn 'Abdu'l-Hādī, *Dhayl 'alā Ṭabaqāt ibn Rajab*, p. 38.

In ḥadīth his works include:

- *Sharḥ Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*
- *Fathu'l-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*
- *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa'l-Ḥikam*

In *fiqh* his works include:

- *al-Istikbrāj fī Ahkām al-Kharāj*;
- *al-Qawā'id al-Fiqhiyyah*.

In biographies his works include:

- The monumental *Dhayl 'alā Ṭabaqāti'l-Ḥanābilah*
- *Mukhtaṣar Sirah 'Umar Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīẓ*

In exhortation his works include:

- *Latā'if al-Ma'ārif fīmā li-Mawāsim al-'Ām min al-Wadhā'if*
- *al-Farq baynan al-Naṣīḥah wa-Ta'yīr*
- *al-Takbīf min al-Nār*
- *Aḥwāl Abl ul-Qubūr*
- *Ṭabqīq Kalimatul-l-Ikhlās*

His Death

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab, may Allāh have mercy on him, died on a Monday night, the fourth of Ramaḍān, 795H, in Damascus.

His Published Works in English

Some of his fine works have been translated and published in English under the Dār as-Sunnah Ibn Rajab series:

- The Excellence of Knowledge
The Virtue of the *Salaf* over the *Khalaf*
- Humility in Prayer
- The Journey to Allāh—An explanation to the Ḥadīth, “*Your actions alone will not save any of you*”
- The Key to Paradise—*An explanation to the Testimony of Faith and its Benefits*
- The Legacy of the Prophet -*An explanation to the Advice given to Ibn ‘Abbās*
- The Heavenly Dispute
- The Journey of the Strangers
- Three that Follow the Deceased—An explanation to the Ḥadīth, “*Three things follow the deceased person (to the grave), two of them return, and only one remains...*”
- Difference between Advising and Shaming—with additional commentary
- *Explanation to the Ḥadīth of the Abū Dardā’*—The Inheritors of the Prophets

THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful

The Imām, may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him, said:

All praise is due to Allāh, we praise Him; seek His help and guidance. Whomsoever Allāh guides, none can misguide him, and he whom Allāh leaves to stray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh alone without partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His slave and Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him).

Imām Aḥmad¹, Abū Dāwūd², Tirmidhī³ and Ibn Mājah⁴ all reported in their books [of ḥadīth]:

“A man from Madīnah came to Abū Dardā’ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) while he was in Damascus, so he asked (the man): ‘What has made you embark on this journey O my brother?’

¹ Imām Aḥmad in his *al-Musnad*, 5/196.

² Abū Dāwūd, #3641

³ Tirmidhī, #2682

⁴ Ibn Mājah, #223

He replied: 'A narration has reached me, which I heard that you narrate from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).'

Abū Dardā' asked: 'Have you not come for some other need?'

The man replied: 'No.'

He again inquired: 'Have you not come for some business?'

(Again) he said: 'No.'

He said: 'So have you only come in search for this ḥadīth?'

He said: 'Yes.'

Abū Dardā' (*radīy Allāhu 'anhū*) said: 'Indeed I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) say: "Whoever treads a path in search of knowledge, then Allāh makes easy a path for him towards paradise. The angels lower their wings out of approval for the student of knowledge. Indeed everything in the heavens and earth seek forgiveness for the scholar even the fish in the sea. The virtue of the scholar over the worshipper, is like the full moon over all the other planets. The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets. The Prophets do not leave behind gold or silver coins to be inherited, rather they leave knowledge, so whoever takes from that has acquired an abundant share.'"

CHAPTER ONE

[The Pursuit for Sacred Knowledge]

The early generations (*Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*), may Allāh be pleased with them, due to their sheer enthusiasm for [sacred] knowledge (*‘ilm*), the religion (*dīn*) and good (*khayr*), used to travel to a far off lands in search of just one ḥadīth that reached them from the Prophet (ﷺ).

Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣarī (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) travelled from Madīnah to Egypt to meet a man from the Companions, who he had heard, was narrating a ḥadīth from the Prophet (ﷺ).

Likewise, Jābir Ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Anṣarī (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) did the same even though he had heard many narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) himself and had narrated them.

One of them would travel to someone lesser than himself in knowledge (*‘ilm*) and virtue (*faḍl*) in order to seek (*ṭalab*) something of knowledge that he himself did not possess.

Suffice to mention the story told to us by Allāh of [Prophet] Mūsā (*‘alayhi as-salām*), and his embarking on a journey with his young companion, and if anyone ever was not in need to travel in

order to seek knowledge (*talab al-'ilm*) then that would have been [Prophet] Mūsā (*'alayhi as-salām*), wherein Allāh completed him and gave him the Torah which had written therein everything, in spite of this, when Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic informed him of Khidr, and that he had knowledge that was specific to him, he asked for a way to meet him, and then he set off along with his servant as Allāh, the Most High says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ
حَتَّى أَتِلَّ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا

“And [remember] when Mūsā said to his young companion, ‘I will not cease [travelling] until I reach the junction of where the two seas meet even if it means continuing for a long period [of travel].”

[*al-Kahf* (18): 60]

Meaning: even if took many years [of travel]. Then Allāh informs us that when he (finally) did meet Khidr he said to him:

هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُعَلِّمَ مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا

“May I follow you on [the condition] that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment?”

[*al-Kahf* (18): 66]

And from their affair whatever else Allāh has described in His book. Also from the ḥadīth of Ubay Ibn Ka'b (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*), from the Prophet (ﷺ) of the story of [Prophet] Mūsā and Khidr as related by both Bukhārī and Muslim.⁵ The story is well known.

⁵ Bukhārī, #74 and Muslim, #2380.

[1.1. Travelling for Knowledge]

Ibn Mas'ūd (*raḍīy Allāhu 'anhu*) used to say: 'I swear by Allāh, besides who there is no other deity, there is not a chapter in the book of Allāh except that I know where it was revealed, and there is not a single verse in the book of Allāh except that I know (for what reason it was revealed)⁶, and if I knew there was someone who was more knowledgeable than me regarding the book of Allāh and a camel was able to take me to him I would indeed go to him.'⁷

Abū Dardā' (*raḍīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said: 'If a verse from the book of Allāh confused me, and I was unable to find anyone who could explain it to me other than a man that lived in Bark-al-Gimād, then I would ride out to him.'⁸

Bark-al-Gimād is the furthest point of Yemen.

Once Maṣrūq left Kūfah and went to Baṣrah to ask a man about a particular verse from the book of Allāh. He found that man did not possess knowledge of that verse, but was informed about another man living in Syria (*Shām*) who could explain. So he returned to Kūfah (Iraq) and then left for Syria, to that very man in search of the knowledge of that verse.⁹

⁶ In one manuscript the wording is: revealed (different verb form but with the same meaning) and in another manuscript: regarding who it was revealed.

⁷ Bukhārī, #5002 and Muslim, #2463.

⁸ Imām Dhahabī mentioned it in *Sīyar*, 2/322.

⁹ Abū Nu'aym, *al-Hilyatu'l-Awliyā'*, 2/95.

Another man travelled from Kūfah to Syria to Abū Dardā' (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) asking him about validity of an oath he had taken.¹⁰

Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr once travelled from Kūfah to Ibn 'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu 'anhumā*) in Makkah to ask him about the explanation (*tafsīr*) of a single verse of the Qur'ān.¹¹

Ḥasan [al-Baṣrī] travelled to Kūfah to ask Ka'b Ibn 'Ujrah (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) about the atonement for *al-aḏḥā* [during the Pilgrimage].¹²

And the exploration into this field is very lengthy.

A man once swore an oath (which he had to fulfil) and it was a difficult issue for the people of jurisprudence to solve for the man (in order to remove the obligation), so he was directed to a place, but he found it to be very distant. It was said to him the place is near for the one that is really concerned about his religion.

In all of this is an indication that whoever holds his religion to be important, just as he holds his worldly matters to be important, then if something occurs in his religion and he is unable to find someone to ask except a person in a far off land. Then he should not delay going to him in order to absolve himself, by doing his religious duty. Like a person who is presented with a worldly benefit (in a far off land) and he hasten to obtain it.

¹⁰ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faḡīḥ wa'l-Mutaḡaqqib*, 2/177.

¹¹ Bukhārī, #4590

¹² Mentioned by al-Khaṭīb al-Baḡhdādī in *al-Riḥla*, #52 and Ibn Kathīr in his commentary on verse *al-Baqarah* (2) : 196

In the ḥadīth under discussion [on page 19-20], Abū Dardā' (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) gives glad tidings to the person who travelled to him seeking a ḥadīth he heard from the Prophet (ﷺ) regarding the virtue of knowledge and this is understood from the statement of Allāh, the Most High:

وَإِذَا
جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنْتَفِقُوا قُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ
رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ

“And when those come to you who believe in Our verses, say, ‘Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy.’”

[*al-An‘ām* (6): 54]

Similarly, once a group of people gathered outside the house of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī to seek knowledge (*talab al-‘ilm*), so his son said some [harsh] words to them. Ḥasan said: ‘Relax my son.’ He then proceeded to recite the verse above.

Both Tirmidhī¹³ and Ibn Mājah¹⁴ on the authority of Abū Sa‘īd (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) as saying: “Indeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) advised them with seeking knowledge and understanding of the religion.”

Zirr Ibn Habaysh (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) came to Safwān Ibn ‘Assāl (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) for the purpose of seeking knowledge and said to him: ‘News has reached me that the angels lower their wings for the student of knowledge.’¹⁵

¹³ Tirmidhī, #2650, #2651.

¹⁴ Ibn Mājah, #247-249.

¹⁵ Tirmidhī, #3535-3536 and he said this ḥadīth is authentic (*ḥasan Saḥīh*).

Once the people gathered outside the door of ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Mubārak so he said: ‘They deserve from (attaining) knowledge, eternal happiness (due to their desire to seek religious instructions). By their crowding (at my door) being envious over seeking knowledge, because it leads to eternity in perpetual bliss.

For this reason, upon his death, Mu‘ādh Ibn Jabal (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) wept out of regret over leaving the gatherings of remembering Allāh so he exclaimed: ‘Indeed I weep over the thirst of midday, standing during the winter nights, and the crowding around the scholars with (my) knees (i.e. sitting) while they were in circles of remembrance.’¹⁶

It is necessary for the scholar to welcome students of knowledge and urge them to act [on what they learn].

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said to his own students, when they had entered upon him: ‘Welcome to you all, may Allāh give you long life in peace, and enter us into the abode of peace (Paradise), it is an obvious good if you are patient; give charity and have certainty. Let not your portion of this affair, may Allāh have mercy upon you, enter into one ear and leave the other. For whoever saw Muḥammad (ﷺ) saw that he came and went and had no interest in constructing houses or palaces, rather Allāh raised for him knowledge, and he dedicated himself to it. Hurry (towards) salvation, for what are you doing, if not that? You have refused! (seeking sacred knowledge), by the Lord of the Ka‘bah, death is almost upon you.’¹⁷

¹⁶ Imām Aḥmad in his book, *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, 2/16, and Abū Nu‘aym in his book, *al-Ḥilyatu’l-ʿAwliyāʾ*, 1/239.

¹⁷ Imām Aḥmad in his book, *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, 2/242

CHAPTER TWO

[Knowledge is a Path Leading to Paradise]

Let us now explain the ḥadīth of Abū Dardā (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) who narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ).

He (ﷺ) said: “Whoever follows a path of seeking knowledge, Allāh will place him on a path leading to Paradise.”

In another narration: “Allāh makes easy for him a path leading to Paradise.”¹⁸

The narration found in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever follows a path of seeking [sacred] knowledge, Allāh will make easy for him a path leading to Paradise.”¹⁹

So following a path to seek knowledge: can carry the meaning

¹⁸ Imām Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*, 5/196, Abū Dāwūd, *al-Sunan*, #3641, Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan*, #2682, Ibn Mājah, *al-Sunan*, #223, Darāmī, *al-Sunan*, 1/98, Ibn Hībān, #88 and others.

¹⁹ Muslim, #2699.

of actual walking a path to the gatherings of knowledge (*majālis al-‘ilm*).

It can also include a more general meaning of following a path that leads to gaining knowledge, such as memorising; studying; reading; revising and trying to understand and reflecting upon it, and other such methods which lead to knowledge.

As for the statement: “*Allāh will make easy a path for him leading to Paradise,*” this conveys various meanings. Among them is that Allāh makes easy for the student of knowledge (*ṭālib al-‘ilm*) to seek knowledge itself (by understanding and learning it). (It also means) he seeks it by making that path clear for him (the right path) and accessible, because knowledge is the path that leads to Paradise.

This is like the statement of the Most High:

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

“And We have certainly made the Qur’ān easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?”

[*al-Qamar* (54): 22]

A group of the *Salaf* said regarding this verse: Is there a student of knowledge so that he can be aided?

Amongst the meanings is also: that Allāh makes easy for the student of knowledge to act upon what that knowledge necessitates if he solely intends (*qasḍ*) learning that knowledge for the sake of Allāh. Thus Allāh will make it a means for his guidance (*hidāyah*) by benefiting him with it and acting on it. These are all paths that lead to Paradise.

[2.1. Knowledge Necessitates Righteous Action]

Furthermore, among the meanings is also that Allāh the Most High, makes easy for him other branches of knowledge to benefit him, so that it can be another path [for him] leading to Paradise.

This is why it is said: 'Whoever acts on what he knows, Allāh causes him to gain knowledge of what he never knew. It is also said: 'The reward of a good action leads to other [good actions] after it.'

An indication of this is found in the statement of Allāh, the Most High:

وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى

"And Allāh increases in guidance those who pursue the path of guidance [giving them greater guidance]..."

[*Maryam* (19): 76]

And similarly His statement:

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ

"As for those who accept to be guided, [Allāh] increases them in guidance and gives them piety."

[*Muhammad* (47): 17]

Thus whoever treads a path of knowledge desiring to be rightly guided by it, Allāh increases him in guidance and [other] beneficial branches of knowledge, all of which necessitate righteous actions which are then paths that lead to Paradise.

Also among its meanings is that Allāh, the Most High, makes easy for the seeker of knowledge to benefit from it (the knowl-

edge) in the Hereafter, and to take a good path which will lead him to Paradise, to cross the Bridge (*al-Ṣirāṭ*) and whatever is after it, and whatever precedes it from the great calamities and severe punishments.

[2.2. Knowledge Directs one to Allāh]

A reason for making easy a path to Paradise, for the seeker of knowledge, if he seeking the face of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic and His pleasure is explained as follows. Knowledge directs one to Allāh and is one of the closest and easiest paths (to Him), so whoever follows this path and does not deviate from it, will reach Allāh and Paradise. The paths that lead to Paradise are made easy for him in this world and in the Hereafter.

As for the one treading a path that he thinks is a path towards Paradise without knowledge, then he has taken one of the most difficult and arduous of paths, which does not lead to what he wants in spite of the severe difficulty.

So there is no path to learning about Allāh and reaching His pleasure and obtaining nearness to Him in the Hereafter except through beneficial knowledge which Allāh sent down with His Messengers, and revealed in His scripture. This knowledge is what guides to Him, lending guidance through the darkness of ignorance (*jahl*); confusion (*shubha*) and doubt (*shukūk*), indeed Allāh has referred to His book as a light (*nūr*) by which one is guided through darkness (*ẓulumāt*).

Allāh says:

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ
 مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾ يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ
 سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى
 النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from (all types of) darkness into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path.”

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 15-16]

[2.3. The Parable between the Possessors of Knowledge and the Stars]

The Prophet (ﷺ) put forth a parable between the possessors of knowledge and the stars that are used to guide [people] through the darkness [of the night].

In *al-Musnad* on the authority of Anas (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Indeed the example of the scholars on earth is like the stars in the sky that are used for guidance on land and sea, so when they are blotted out you are on the verge of falling into misguidance.”²⁰

This similitude is very appropriate, as the path to understanding Allāh’s oneness (*tawhīd*), knowledge of Allāh, the Most High and His commands, His reward and punishment cannot be perceived

²⁰ Imām Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*, 3/157.

through intuition, rather it is known through [divine] revelation. He has made this clear in His Book and on the tongue of His Messenger (ﷺ).

So the scholars are guides for what Allāh has revealed to His Messenger, for others to be guided through the darkness of ignorance; confusion and misguidance (*ḍalāl*). When they are gone the seeker [of knowledge] goes astray.

Scholars have been likened to the stars, and the stars are in the sky, and they have three benefits: they are used to guide [people] through the darkness, they adorn the sky, and they are missiles for the devils that try to eavesdrop.

The scholars that are on earth (also) have three of these characteristics: through them guidance is sought out of darkness; they are the adornment of the earth; they also are missiles for the devils that mix the truth (*ḥaqq*) with falsehood (*bāṭil*) and those that try add to the religion what does not belong to it from the people of desires (*hawā*). As long as knowledge remains on earth the people will remain upon guidance.

[2.4. Knowledge is a Cause for People to be Guided]

The endurance of knowledge means that those who carry it or those who establish it, also endure, and when they depart, then people will fall into misguidance, as in the authentic ḥadīth from the Prophet (ﷺ): “Verily Allāh does not take away knowledge by snatching it from hearts of men, rather He takes it away by removing the scholars. So that when there are no more scholars left, the people take the ignorant as their leaders, then they are asked

for verdicts, which they deliver without knowledge thereby going astray themselves and leading others astray.”²¹

Tirmidhī transmitted from the ḥadīth of Jubayr Ibn Nufayr (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*), on the authority of Abū Dardā’ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) who said: ‘We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said: “There will be a time when knowledge will be taken from people until what remains from it shall not amount to anything.” So Ziyād Ibn Labīd al-Anṣarī said: ‘How will it be taken while we recite it, and our women and children recite it? He (ﷺ) said: “May your mother be bereaved of you O Ziyād, I used to consider you from the learned of the people of Madīnah. The Torah and the Injīl are with the Jews and Christians, yet do they benefit from them in any way?”’²²

Jubayr Ibn Nufayr said: ‘I met ‘Ubadah Ibn Ṣammit and said to him: ‘Have you heard what your brother Abū Dardā’ is saying? I then informed him of what he said, and he replied: Abū Dardā’ has spoken the truth, and if you wish I can inform you of the first knowledge to be removed from the people. It is humility (*khushū*).’²³ Soon you will enter the Congregational Masjid and not see a single person having humility (being in awe of Allah)!’

Nasā’ī relates similar ḥadīth from Jubayr Ibn Nufayr, on the authority of ‘Awf Ibn Mālīk (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) from the Prophet

²¹ Bukhārī, #100, Muslim, #2673 on the authority of ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*).

²² Tirmidhī. #2653.

²³ Refer to the tremendous book on this subject by Imām Ibn Rajab, ‘*Humility in Prayer*’, p27-28, 2nd edition 2012.; published by Dar as-Sunnah Publisher. Birmingham, UK.

(ﷺ) with a similar narration, and in his ḥadīth: “The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned the misguidance of the Jews and Christians despite their possessing scriptures.”²⁴

Jubayr Ibn Nufayr also relates: ‘So I met Shaddād Ibn Aws and told him of the ḥadīth of ‘Awf ibn Mālīk, to which he replied: ‘He has spoken the truth. Shall I not inform you about the first occurrence of the lifting of knowledge? Humility will be lifted to the point that you not see a single humble person.’

Imām Aḥmad transmitted from the ḥadīth of Ziyād Ibn Labid (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that he mentioned something, whereupon the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “That is the time when knowledge will disappear.” Ziyād mentioned this narration and said: ‘Do not the Jews and Christians read the Torah and Injīl without acting on it in any way.’²⁵ He did not mention anything after that.

In all these narrations we find the disappearance of knowledge comes with the disappearance of action, and that the Companions explained the removal of this inner knowledge (*‘ilm al-bāṭin*) from the hearts as referring to humility.

Likewise it has been narrated from Hudayfah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*): ‘Indeed the first of knowledge to be lifted is humility.’²⁶

²⁴ Nasā’ī in his *Sunan al-Kubrah*, 3/5909.

²⁵ Imām Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*, 4/160, 218, 219.

²⁶ Imām Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, 2/135 and Abū Nu‘aym, *al-Hīyatu’l-Anwīyā’*, 1/281 with the wording: ‘The first thing you will lose from your religion is humility.’

CHAPTER THREE

[Knowledge of the Tongue and the Heart]

Knowledge is of two types as was said by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: 'Knowledge of the tongue, that is the evidence of Allāh against the son of Adam, and knowledge in the heart, that is the beneficial knowledge.'²⁷

It has been narrated from Ḥasan²⁸ in mursal form from the Prophet (ﷺ), as Ibn Mas'ūd (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) relates in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 'Indeed people will read the Qur'ān and it will not go beyond their throats, but only when it settles in the heart and becomes deep rooted in it, does it benefit.'²⁹

[3.1 Beneficial knowledge]

So beneficial knowledge (*'ilm al-nāfi'*) is what enters the heart (*qalb*) and weighs down on it with the knowledge (*ma'rifa*) of Allāh,

²⁷ Dārimī, 1/102

²⁸ Ibn Abī Shaybah in *al-Mūsānnaḥ*, 13/235 and others.

²⁹ Muslim, #822.

the Most High, His Greatness, fear of Him, His glorification, venerating Him and loving Him. So when these characteristics settle in the heart, it is humbled, then all the limbs follow suit.

As related in Saḥiḥ Muslim, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say:

« إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ »

“I seek refuge in Allāh from knowledge that does not benefit and from a heart that has no fear.”³⁰

This indicates knowledge which does not foster humility in the heart is not beneficial.

It was narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he used to ask Allāh for beneficial knowledge.³¹

In another narration he (ﷺ) said: “Ask Allāh for beneficial knowledge, and seek refuge in Allāh from knowledge which does not benefit.”³²

As for the knowledge that is on the tongue then it is Allāh’s evidence against the son of Adam. As the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The Qur’ān is evidence for you, or against you.”³³

³⁰ Muslim, #2722 from the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas‘ūd (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*).

³¹ Aḥmad, 6/294, 305, 318, 322, Nasā’ī in *al-Kubrah*, 2/9930, and Ibn Mājah, #925 from the ḥadīth of Umm Salamah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anḥā*).

³² Nasā’ī in *al-Kubrah*, 1-2/7867, Ibn Mājah, #3843 and others.

³³ Muslim, #223.

So when this inner knowledge leaves the people what is left is whatever appears on the tongues as evidence, and then this knowledge which is evidence goes with the people that carry it, so nothing remains of the religion except in name, so the Qur'ān remains in the books then is raised up (removed) towards the last days so nothing remains, not in written form or in the hearts.

[3.2. The Division of Knowledge]

Scholars have divided knowledge into two types—the inner (*bāṭin*) and the outer (*ẓāhir*), as for inner knowledge (*‘ilm al-bāṭin*): What enters the hearts and gives rise to fear (*khashya*), humility (*khushū*), veneration (*ta‘ẓīm*), glorification (*ijlāl*), love (*muḥabbah*), intimacy (*uns*) and longing (*shawq*).

And the outer knowledge (*‘ilm al-ẓāhir*): Whatever is on the tongue and with that the evidence of Allāh over His slaves is established.

Wahb Ibn Munabbih wrote to Makhūl: ‘Surely, you are a man that has gained through outer knowledge of Islām and honour. So seek from the inner knowledge of Islām; gain the love of Allāh and nearness to Him.’³⁴

In another narration he wrote to him: ‘Because of your outer knowledge, you have gained a [high] status and honour. So seek from the inner knowledge to to attain a high status with Allāh and nearness to Him. And you should know that one of the two stations prevents the other.’

³⁴ Abū Nu‘aym, *al-Hilyatu'l-Awliyā*, 4/54

Imām Wahb referred to this outer knowledge as knowledge of religious verdicts and rulings, the lawful (*ḥalāl*) and unlawful (*ḥarām*), stories and admonitions, and that is what is manifested on the tongue.

This knowledge necessitates that people have love for him, and hold him in high veneration, so (this knowledge) prevents him from stopping at that point, relying on it or being distracted by being exalted by people and their love. For the one that does that is cut off from Allāh and his sight becomes obscured by people away from the truth.

Wahb then referred knowledge of the inner self as something that enters the heart, and causes it to have fear, glorification and veneration, and orders him to seek love from Allāh and drawing near to Him.

CHAPTER FOUR

[The Categories of the Scholars]

Many of the righteous predecessors (*Salaf*), such as Sufyān al-Thawrī and others, categorised scholars into three types.

The scholar who knows, both Allāh and His command. They point at those that have both these two types of knowledge; inner and outer, as the most honourable of scholars. They are the ones that are being praised in the statement of the Most High:

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

“Only those of His servants with knowledge have fear of Allāh”

[*Fāṭir* (35):28]

And His statement:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى
عَلَيْهِمْ يَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَنَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كَانَ
وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُولًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَيَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ
خُشُوعًا ﴿١٠٩﴾

“Indeed, those who were given knowledge before it—when it is recited to them, they fall upon their faces in prostration. Saying: ‘Glory be to our Lord! Indeed, the promise of our Lord has been truly fulfilled.’ Weeping, they fall to the ground in prostration, and it increases them in humility [and submission].”

[*al-Isrā’* (17):107-109]

Many of the righteous predecessors said: ‘Knowledge is not by how much of it can be narrated; rather knowledge is humility.’³⁵

Some of them said: ‘Having fear of Allāh is sufficient as knowledge, and being deceived (away from) Allāh is sufficient as ignorance.’³⁶

They also said: ‘The one who knows Allāh does not [necessarily] know the commandments of Allāh.’

Such are the people of inner knowledge those who fear Allāh, but lack comprehension of the outer knowledge (of Islāmic Jurisprudence).

They similarly said: ‘The one who knows the commandments of Allāh does not [necessarily] know Allāh.’

Such are possessors of the outer knowledge, who have no effectiveness of the inner knowledge, and they do not possess fear or humility. They are considered as blameworthy with the

³⁵ Imām Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, 2/106 and Abū Nu‘aym, *al-Hilyatu’l-Awliyā’*, 1/131.

³⁶ Imām ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, p.15 and Imām Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, 2/106

righteous predecessors (*salaf*). Some of them said: 'This is the corrupt scholar.'

These people stopped with the outer knowledge, while the beneficial knowledge does not reach their hearts, nor do they smell its scent, being overcome by heedlessness and hardheartedness, turning away from the Hereafter and competing in worldly gains, and love of status amongst its people.

[4.1. The Corrupt Scholars]

They prevent others from having good thoughts about those whose beneficial knowledge reaches the heart. They do not love them, nor do they sit with them. Maybe even disparaging them and saying: 'They are not real scholars!' This is from the deception and delusions of Satan in order to stop them from reaching the beneficial knowledge which has been praised by Allāh, His Messenger (ﷺ), the righteous predecessors (*salaf*), the Muslim nation and its leaders.

For this reason the scholars of the world despise the scholars of the Hereafter, striving to harm them and their efforts, as they strove to harm Sa'īd Ibn al-Mūsāyyib, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Imām Mālik, Imām Aḥmad, and the others from the upright scholars (*rabāniyyūn*). This is because the scholars of the Hereafter are the successors [and inheritors] of the Messengers, whereas the evil scholars have some resemblance to those who have earned the wrath of Allāh. They are enemies and killers of the Messengers, and those who order justice among people, and they have the most enmity and envy. Due to their severe love of the world they do not revere knowledge or religion; rather they venerate wealth, status and positions with the kings.

As one of the ministers said to Ḥajjāj Ibn Artā: 'Indeed you have religion, and you have understanding.' So Ḥajjāj said: 'Why do you not instead say indeed you have honour and you have worth.' The minister said: 'Indeed I swear by Allāh you are belittling what Allāh has given much importance to, and are giving importance to that which Allāh belittles.'

[4.2. The Deceived Scholars]

Many of those that claim to have knowledge of the heart and speak about it, limit themselves to it, disparage outer knowledge of the limbs, which are the rulings and legislation, the lawful and unlawful. And they defame its people by saying: They are obscure, people of superficial issues, this necessitates criticism of the legislation itself, and righteous actions that the Messengers (*'alayhi as-salām*) came with and encouraged doing them, giving them due importance.

Perhaps some of them become detached from acting on the outer actions [of worship], claiming they are for the general masses, and as for the ones who has reached (a certain status) they have no need for worship, such acts are considered a veil for him. Junayd and others have remarked upon such people, saying: 'What they have attained is only the Hell-fire.'

This is from the greatest deceptions of Satan that he has deluded them with. He does not cease to cause mischief until he makes them leave Islām all together.

Among them are those who think that this inner knowledge cannot be learnt from the Prophetic guidance, nor from the Qur'ān or the Sunnah, instead it is learnt from their own minds (*kebawātir*)

and inspiration (*ilbāmāt*) and unveilings (*kashufāt*) [through various practices]. They have bad suspicion of the perfect legislation (*Shari'ah*), thinking that it has not brought beneficial knowledge which rectifies the heart and brings you nearer to Allāh. They also think they must turn away from what the Messenger (ﷺ) said in this regard completely, speaking with only their opinions and their minds. They are astray themselves and they lead others astray.

[4.3 The Virtuous Scholars]

So it is clear that the best of scholars are those who are knowledgeable of Allāh and His commandments. They combine both types of knowledge, [the outer and inner] learning the two together based upon the Qur'ān and Sunnah, whatever agrees with it they accept and whatever opposes it, they reject.

These scholars are the best of mankind after the Messengers (*'alayhi as-salām*). They are the true successors (and inheritors) of the Prophets. Many of them are from the Companions (of the Prophet (ﷺ)), such as the four rightly guided successors (Abū Bakr, 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān and 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib), and Mu'adh, Abū Dardā', Salmān (al-Farsi), Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu 'anhum*) and many others.³⁷

Likewise those that came after them like Ḥasan (al Baṣrī), Sa'īd Ibn al Mūsāyyib, 'Atā', Ṭāwūs, Mujāhid, Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr, al-Nakha'ī and Yahyā Ibn Abī Kathīr. In addition, those who came after them such as (Sufyān) al-Thawrī, Awza'ī, Imām Aḥmad and other upright scholars.

³⁷ Refer to the back of this work p130-136, for a detail biographical account.

‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) named upright scholars (*rabbāniyyūn*), referring to the many times they have been mentioned to in the book of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic. He said of them: ‘The people are of three types: The upright scholar, the seeker on the path to salvation, and the common laypeople’³⁸

Then he went on to mention in length about the corrupt scholars and the righteous scholars which I have already explained elsewhere in this book.

The objective here is to seek knowledge for the reason of reaching paradise.

³⁸ Abū Nu‘aym, *al-Hilyatu’l-Awliyā’*, pp.79-80.

CHAPTER FIVE

[The Gatherings of Knowledge]

In the well-known ḥadīth, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “When one of you passes by the Gardens of Paradise then indulge in them.” They Companions asked: ‘What are the Gardens of Paradise?’ He said: ‘Circles of knowledge.’³⁹

Ibn Mas‘ūd (*raḍīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) use to say after hearing these words: ‘I do not mean the story tellers, rather the circles of *fiqh* (jurisprudence).’

A similar ḥadīth has also been narrated by Anas Ibn Mālīk (*raḍīy Allāhu ‘anhu*).⁴⁰

³⁹ Tirmidhī, #3509 from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) from the Prophet (ﷺ) directly with the wording: “When you pass by the Gardens of Paradise then indulge.” I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh and what are the Gardens of Paradise?’ He said: “The Masjids.” I said: ‘What does it mean to indulge O Messenger of Allāh?’ He said: (to say) “*Subḥan Allāh, alḤamdulillāh, lā ila ha illa Allāh* and *Allāhu Akbar*.” Imām Tirmidhī said this ḥadīth is ḥasan garīb.

⁴⁰ Imām Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*, 3/150, Tirmidhī: #3510, from the ḥadīth of ‘Anas (*raḍīy Allāhu ‘anhu*). Tirmidhī said this ḥadīth is ḥasan garīb (good) by way from the ḥadīth of Thabit from Anas (*raḍīy Allāhu ‘anhu*)

‘Ata’ al-Khurasanī said: ‘The gatherings of remembrance are gatherings of [the study of] lawful (*halal*) and unlawful (*haram*), how to buy and sell, how to perform the Prayer (*ṣalah*) and Fast (*ṣawm*), [learn the rulings regarding] marriage and divorce, how to perform the Pilgrimage (*hajj*) and so on and so forth.’⁴¹

Yahyā Ibn Abī Kathīr said: ‘A lesson of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is [like performing] prayer.’⁴²

Abū Suwār al ‘Adawī was in a circle of learning knowledge and among them was a young man saying to them say: “*Subhān Allāh* [Glory be to Allāh],” and “*alḤamdulillāh* [All Praises and Thanks is for Allāh].” [Upon hearing this] Abū Suwār became angry and said: ‘Woe unto you what else are we doing?’

What is meant here is, the gatherings of remembrance are not gatherings in which merely uttering Allāh’s name is remembrance or saying: “*Subhān Allāh, Allāhu Akbar, alḤamdulillāh*.” Rather it includes those things that mention the commands of Allāh and His prohibitions, the lawful and unlawful, and whatever He loves and is pleased with. It may be the case that this type of remembrance (*dhikr*) is of more benefit than the former. The reason being that knowing the lawful and unlawful is generally an obligation on all Muslims, according to whatever concerns him, as for remembering Allāh on the tongue, then most of it is voluntary, but may reach an obligatory level such as remembrance in the prescribe prayers.

⁴¹ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faṭāwā*, 1/13.

⁴² Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faṭāwā*, 1/17.

[5.1 What is Compulsory for Every Muslim to Know?]

As for having knowledge of what Allāh has ordered and forbidden; what He likes and is pleased with; and what He dislikes and has forbidden, then it is a must for anyone that wants a share of knowledge, to learn.

In this regards it has been narrated that: "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim."⁴³

So it is compulsory for every Muslim to have knowledge of what he needs in his religion, such as purification, prayer and fasting.

Furthermore, it is necessary for the one that has wealth that he learn what obligations there are on his wealth by way of compulsory charity (*ṣakat*) and spending, Pilgrimage (*hajj*) and striving in the way of Allāh.

Likewise, it is also compulsory for the person selling and buying to learn what is lawful and unlawful in trade.

As 'Umar, (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said: 'No one should sell (anything) in our market except the one who has understanding in the religion.'⁴⁴

It has been narrated with a weak chain from 'Alī (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) who said: 'Understanding (*fiqh*) is before business, so whoever does business without understanding it will fall into usury

⁴³ Ibn Mājah, #224 from the ḥadīth of Anas (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*).

⁴⁴ Tirmidhī, # 487.

with no chance of escape from it.⁴⁵

‘Abdullāh Ibn al Mubārak was asked: ‘What is obligatory for people to learn from knowledge?’ He replied: ‘A man should not proceed into something except with knowledge that he asks and learns concerning it. This is what is obligatory for the people to learn from knowledge, he then explained further by saying: ‘If a person had no wealth then it would not be an obligation for him to learn about *ṣakāt*. So the moment he has two hundred *dirhams* the obligation then falls on him to learn how much he must pay (in *ṣakāt*) and when he must pay and where he pays it, and all of the other things accordingly.’⁴⁶

Imām Aḥmad, may Allāh have mercy upon him, was asked about what is obligatory for a man to learn?

He said: ‘What he needs to establish first is his prayers and the divine commands concerning fasting, *ṣakāt*. He then mentioned all the basic laws of Islām.’ He also said: ‘That he must learn all of those things.’ He also said: ‘The thing that a person must learn from knowledge is what he needs to know for his prayer and to establish his religion.’⁴⁷

You should know that knowledge of the lawful and unlawful is noble. It includes learning what is obligatory for each and every person (*fard ‘ayn*) and what is obligatory for people as a community (*fard kifāyah*).

⁴⁵ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faḥīb*, 1/45.

⁴⁶ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faḥīb*, 1/45.

⁴⁷ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faḥīb*, 1/45.

The scholars have wrote that learning knowledge is more virtuous than voluntary acts of worship, among those that said so were Imām Aḥmad and Imām Ishāq.

[5.2. How the Scholars were Hesitant in giving Religious Verdicts]

The leaders of the *Salaf* use to be careful with their speech out of fear, because the one speaking was informing people about Allāh, His commands and His prohibitions, propagating His laws and religion.

Whenever Ibn Sireīn was asked regarding the lawful and unlawful the colour of his face would change, so much so that it was no longer the same as it was (before he was asked).⁴⁸

‘Atā’ Ibn al-Sā’ib said: ‘I met people that if they were asked regarding a religious verdict they would tremble while speaking.’⁴⁹

It has also been narrated from Imām Mālik that when he was asked regarding a legal issue he would feel that he was standing between the Hellfire and Paradise.⁵⁰

Imām Aḥmad was very careful about using the words lawful and unlawful or claim something was abrogated, whereas others have dared so often. Most of his answers began with the words:

⁴⁸ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faqīh*, 1/167.

⁴⁹ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faqīh*, 1/167.

⁵⁰ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faqīh*, 1/167.

“I hope that...,” “I fear...,” “It is more beloved to me...” and so on. Imām Mālik, and many others, would often say, “I do not know.”

Imām Aḥmad use to say that in this issue the *Salaf* have many different sayings. So what he meant by that was he was not sure of the best opinion.

[5.3. The Gatherings of Remembrance]

Among the gatherings of remembrance also include the gatherings wherein the explanation of the Book of Allāh is mentioned or the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) is related.

So if the narration is mentioned with an explanation of its meanings, then that is more complete and better, than simply mentioning the words, and delving into the understanding of the religion. For every knowledge is extracted from the Book of Allāh or the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ). Whether it is from the Islāmic sciences such as: the outer actions and statements (*a'māl al-ẓāhira wa'l-aqwāl*), or from the sciences of creed (*īmān*) which are the inner beliefs (*al-'ittiqādāt al-bāṭina*), the evidences are many in the Book and the Sunnah. Or from the sciences of excellence of worship (*ihsān*) which are things like constant awareness of Allāh (*al-murāqaba*) and witnessing with the heart (*al-mushahadah bi'l-qalb*), knowledge of humility (*al-kehasiya*), love (*al-muḥabbah*), hope (*al-rajā'*), repentance (*al-inābah*), patience (*al-ṣabr*), happiness and other states of the soul.

All of which the Prophet (ﷺ) termed in the ḥadīth of the question posed by the Angel Jibrīl (*'alayhi as-salām*)—understanding in the religion.

[5.4. The Best Gatherings of Remembrance]

So the understanding of the religion and sitting for it is from the best gatherings of remembrance (*dhikr*) which are like the gardens of Paradise. They are better than the gatherings wherein Allāh's name is mentioned through *tasbīh* (saying, "*Subhān Allāh*"), *tahmīd* (saying, "*al-Hamdulillāh*") and *takbīr* (saying, "*Allāhu akbar*"), this is because the former revolves around an obligation for either the individual or the community, whereas remembering Allāh's name is purely a voluntary act [in most cases].

One of the *Salaf* entered a *Masjid* in Baṣrah and found two gatherings. In one there was a story teller and in the other a scholar teaching *fiqh*, so he prayed two units of prayer seeking Allāh's guidance (*istikbarah*) to help him decide which gathering to sit in. Then he became tired and in his sleep saw someone say to him: 'Do you think the two circles are equal?' If you wish I can show you the place where Jibrīl (*'alayhi as-salām*) sat, near the gathering of the scholar teaching *fiqh*.

We shall mention in what follows, texts that show the virtue of knowledge over the different types of worship such as remembering (Allāh) and others by Allāh's will.

Zayd Ibn Aslam was from amongst the prominent scholars of Madīnah. He use to have a gathering in the masjid where the explanation of the Qur'ān was mentioned, along with ḥadīth and *fiqh*, so a man came to him and said: 'Indeed I saw (in a dream) some of the people of the sky descending and saying to the people of this gathering: 'These (people) are safe in gardens of Paradise.' Then they showed him a fish being sent down and placed in front of them.' Another man came to him and said: 'Indeed I saw (in

a dream) the Prophet (ﷺ), Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, may Allāh be pleased with them both, they come out of this door while the Prophet (ﷺ) was saying: ‘Let us go to Zayd and sit with him and listen to his speech.’ Then the Prophet (ﷺ) came to him, sat by his side and grasped his hand.

Zayd did not stay alive long after these visions and died shortly after, may Allāh, the Most High, have mercy upon him.

Even though what we have mentioned regarding the virtue of knowledge over admonitions, the scholar must occasionally admonish people by relating stories to them. This helps in removing the harshness from their hearts, by mentioning Allāh and His favours, for indeed the Qur’ān covers all of that. The learned scholar is the one who truly understands the Book of Allāh and implements what is in it.

‘Alī (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) said: ‘The truly learned scholar is the one, who does not make people despair from the mercy of Allāh; nor does he make allowances for them actions decreed sinful by Allāh; neither does he leave the Qur’ān causing others to go to other books.’⁵²

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to put off delivering sermons to his Companions at times, out of fear of making them bored.⁵³

⁵¹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, p.89

⁵² Al-Khaṭīb in his book, *al-Faqīh wa’l-Mutafaqīh*, 2/161, and Ājurī in, *Akhlāq al-‘Ulamāh*, pp.49-50.

⁵³ Bukhārī, #68, and Muslim, #2821.

CHAPTER SIX

[All of Creation seeks forgiveness for the Scholars]

[6.1. Angels Lowering their Wings for the Student of Knowledge]

His statement (ﷺ): “Indeed, the angels lower their wings to the student of knowledge out of pleasure for what he is doing.” Ibn Mājah from the ḥadīth of Zirr Ibn Hubaysh who said: ‘I met Safwān Ibn ‘Assāl.’ He said: ‘What has brought you here?’ I said: ‘To seek knowledge.’ He replied: ‘Indeed I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) say: “There is not a person who leaves his house in order to seek knowledge except the angels lower their wings out of pleasure for what he is doing.”’⁵⁴

It is narrated by Tirmidhī⁵⁵ and others directly from Safwān.

The scholars have differed in the explanation of the ḥadīth,

⁵⁴ Ibn Mājah, #226, #4070.

⁵⁵ Tirmidhī, #3536 from Safwān Ibn ‘Assāl said: It has reached me that the angels....the remainder of the ḥadīth. And Tirmidhī said: ‘The ḥadīth is authentic.’

“angels lowering their wings”

Some have taken the literal meaning, that the meaning is they spread them for the students of knowledge in order to carry them to their destination on earth which they seek out for knowledge, out of help and ease for them.

One atheist heard this ḥadīth and said to the students of knowledge: ‘Lift your legs over the angels wings so you do not break them,’ in order to mock them. He continued to say this until his legs shrivelled up and he fell to the ground (paralysed), as a punishment for what he uttered.

Another one said: ‘I will break the angels’ wings. So shoes were made for him with many spikes, as he made his way to a gathering of knowledge his legs shrivelled up and he fell down and was struck with gangrene (*al-akalah*).’⁵⁶

Others have explained lowering of the wings out of approval for them; showing humbleness towards the students of knowledge as in the statement of the Most High:

وَأَخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢١٥﴾

“And lower your wing to those who follow you of the believers.”

[*al-Shu‘ara* (26): 215]

This opinion may have legitimacy, because the angels actually have wings.

⁵⁶ A disease that occurs in the limbs, from the root word which means to eat.

⁵⁷ Al-Ājurī, *Akhlāq al-‘Ulāma*, pp. 49-50

Some have explained it as the angels encircle the gatherings of knowledge and go up to the sky as is very clearly stated in the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) from the Prophet (ﷺ):

Something similar has been mentioned in some wording of the ḥadīth reported from Safwān Ibn ‘Assāl directly from the prophet (ﷺ): Indeed the students of knowledge are encircled by the angels that shade them with their wings, then they ride together until they reach the sky, out of love for what they seek.

This seems to be the statement that is most similar (to the verse) and Allāh knows best.

[6.2. All of Creation seeks forgiveness for the Scholars]

The statement of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Indeed the scholar has those that are in the sky and on earth to seek forgiveness for him, even the fish in the depths of the sea.”

Allāh has informed in His book about the angels of the sky seeking forgiveness for the believers generally as the statement the Most High says:

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ
وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

“Those [angels] who carry the Throne, and all those around it, exalt [Allāh] with praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who have believed.”

[*al-Ghāfir* (40): 7]

And the statement of the Most High:

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَنْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ

“...and the angels glorify [Allāh] with praise of
their Lord and ask forgiveness for those who are
on earth.”

[*al-Shurāh* (42): 4]

This is for the believers in general.

As for the scholars, then the people of the sky and earth seek forgiveness for them even the fish in the sea.

Tirmidhī reported from the ḥadīth of Abū Umāmah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) who said: ‘The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Indeed Allāh, His Angels, the inhabitants of the heavens and the earths—even the ant in his hole, even the fish—send salutations upon the one who teaches the people to do good.”’⁵⁸

Ṭabarānī reported from the ḥadīth of Jābir (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) who said: ‘The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The one, who teaches the people good, causes everything to seek forgiveness for him even the fish in the seas.”’⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Tirmidhī, #2685. Authenticated by Tirmidhī.

⁵⁹ In *Ansaf*, #2619. Ṭabarānī said: ‘No one has narrated this ḥadīth from ‘Amash except Abū Ishāq al Farazī. And Haythamī mentioned in *al-Majma‘* 1/124, and said: ‘In the chain is Ismā‘īl Ibn ‘Abdullāh Ibn Zararah, and Ibn Hibbān regarded as reliable. Al-Azdī said: ‘His narration is rejected and not to be taken, and the rest of the narrators are narrators of Bukhārī.’

It has been narrated from the ḥadīth of Barā' Ibn 'Āzib (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) who said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets. The inhabitants in the sky love them, and the fish in the sea seek forgiveness for them when they die, until the Day of Judgment.""⁶⁰

It has also been mentioned regarding seeking forgiveness for the student of knowledge. In the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad from Qabisah Ibn al-Mukhāriq who said: 'I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he asked: "What has brought you?" I said: 'I have become old and my bones have become delicate, and I have come to you to teach me what Allāh will benefit me through it.' He said: "O Qabisah, I have not passed by a stone, or a tree, or lump of earth except that it was seeking forgiveness for you."'⁶¹

The statement of Allāh the exalted:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٤١﴾ وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً
وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ
مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٣﴾

"O You who believe! Remember Allāh much. And glorify Him in the morning and the evening. It is He who bestows His blessing down upon you, as

⁶⁰ Qurtubī strengthened it in his explanation of the Qur'ān, 4/41 with Abū Muḥammad 'Abdu'l-Ghanī al-Ḥāfiẓ from the ḥadīth Barakah Ibn Nashīth and he is 'Ankal Ibn Ḥakarik and his explanation, Barakah Ibn Nasheth was a Ḥafiz, 'Umar Ibn al Mu'amil reported that Muḥammad Ibn Abī al-Khasīb reported that 'Ankal reported that Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq reported that shareek from Abū Ishāq from al-Barā....So he mentioned it. He also mentioned al-Daylamī in *al-Firdous*, 3/75 from al-Barā Ibn 'Āzib (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*).

⁶¹ Imām Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*, 1/60

do His angels, to bring you out of the depths of darkness into the light. He is Most Merciful to the believers.”

[*al-Aḥzāb* (33): 41-43]

[6.3. The Virtues of the Scholars]

Allāh and His angels send blessings on the people of remembrance, and knowledge is the best type of remembrance as has been established previously.

Ḥākim⁶² reported from the ḥadīth of Sālim Ibn ‘Āmir who said: ‘A man came to Abū Umāmah and said: ‘O Abū Umāmah, I see in my dream the angels sending blessings on you every time you enter and leave, and whenever you stand up and sit down.’ So he said: ‘O Allāh forgive us.’ We have called you (directing it at a gathering), and if you wished the angels would send blessings upon us. Then he recited the verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ۖ وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً
وَأَصِيلًا ۚ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم
مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا

“O You who believe! Remember Allāh much. And glorify Him in the morning and the evening. It is He who bestows His blessing down upon you, as do His angels, to bring you out of the depths of darkness into the light. He is Most Merciful to the believers.”

[*al-Aḥzāb* (33): 41-43]

⁶² In *al-Mustadrak*, 2/418. Ḥākim said: ‘This ḥadīth is authentic according to the criteria of Muslim but he did not transmit it.’

Some of them have mentioned the secret as to why the creatures of earth seek forgiveness for the scholars, that is because the scholars order people to show kindness to all of creation, and kindness to animals that can be slaughtered or killed, so their benefit even reaches the animals, and for this reason they seek forgiveness for them.

Another meaning is also apparent in this; that is all creatures obey Allāh, with full devotion, proclaiming His praise unlike the sinners amongst His two creations: Jinn and mankind. For all of creation obeys Allāh and loves the people that obey Him. So how would it be with the scholar who knows Allāh and knows His rights and calls to His obedience?

So whoever has this attribute, then Allāh loves him; purifies him, praises him, ordering His servants of the sky, the earth, and the rest of creation to love him and pray for him. This is the seeking of blessings for him, and the love for him is placed in the hearts of the believing servants.

As Allāh the Exalted says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ
الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا

“Indeed, for those who believe and do righteous actions - the All-Merciful will bestow His love on them.”

[*Maryam* (19): 96]

[6.4. The Weeping of Creation for the Scholars]

This affection for the scholar is not specific to animals either; rather it extends to inanimate objects that love him too.

As is explained in the statement of the Most High:

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْظَرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

“Neither heaven nor earth shed any tears over them and they were granted no respite.”

[*al-Dukhān* (44): 29]

The sky and earth weep for the believer who dies for forty days.

In a ḥadīth it states: “Indeed the earth says to a believer when he is buried: ‘If you were the most beloved to me when you walked on my back, then you shall see what I do now that you are inside of me.’”⁶³

The sinners amongst the creation of men and jinn hate the believer and the scholar. This is because disobedience to Allāh means putting their desires over the love of Allāh and his obedience, so they hate Allāh’s obedience and its people. Whoever loves Allāh, His obedience and love’s its people, especially those who call to His obedience and command people with the same call.

Likewise, when knowledge appears on earth and is acted upon, blessings start to flow and all types of sustenance descend from the heavens, so that the inhabitants of earth can live, even the ants and other animals with its blessings. The inhabitants of the

⁶³ Tirmidhī, #2460. He said this ḥadīth is good, and we do not know it from any other chain except this one.

heavens rejoice at the good actions that rise towards them, and they seek forgiveness for the ones that are responsible for those actions.

The opposite of this, is when one hides knowledge (from the people) which Allāh has ordered to be made known. Allāh curses the concealer of knowledge, as do the angels and the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth. The one who strives to extinguish the light of Allāh on earth, the result of which causes sins to be committed, oppression, hostility and transgression to appear amongst the masses.

Allāh, the Most High says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَهْدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ
لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّعِينُونَ

“Indeed, those who hide the Clear Signs and Guidance We have sent down [revealed], after We have made it clear unto mankind through the divine book, it is these Allāh curses, and the cursers, [justly] curse them.”

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 159]

It is said that this verse was revealed concerning the people of the book, those that hid knowledge they had about the Prophet’s (ﷺ) description, [which was revealed to them].

Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) use to say: “Had it not been for a verse in the Qur’ān I would have never narrated anything to you ever. Then he recited the above verse.”⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Bukhārī, #117 with wording: ‘Had it not been for two verses.’

In the *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah as reported by al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said regarding the statement:

يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّعْنُونَ

“It is these Allāh curses, and the cursers, [justly] curse them”

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 159],

“These are creatures of the earth.”⁶⁵

This has also been narrated from al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) directly.⁶⁶

It has been narrated from a group of the *Salaf* who said: ‘They are cursed by the creatures of the earth, and say: ‘We have been denied rain because of the sins of the children of Adam.’”

Indeed hiding beneficial knowledge is the cause of ignorance and sins appearing. It stops the rain from falling, causes calamities to descend and even affects the creatures who end up being destroyed because of the sins of the children of Adam. Therefore, the creatures curse those that are responsible, [for this corruption] and their loss.

⁶⁵ Ibn Mājah, #4021

⁶⁶ See *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, 3/249

CHAPTER SEVEN

[Love for the Scholars]

What becomes clear from [the previous discourses] is that loving the scholars is from the religion, as 'Alī (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said to Kumayl Ibn Ziyād (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*): 'Love of the scholars is part and parcel of the religion.

In the well known saying (we learn): 'Be a scholar, a learner, a listener, or one who loves them. But do not be the fifth (type) otherwise you will be destroyed.'⁶⁷

Some among the *Salaf* commented on this saying: 'Glory be to Allāh! Allāh has made a way out for them.'⁶⁸

This means whoever does not fall into the four praised categories falls into the fifth destructive one. That is to say whoever is not: a scholar; a student; a listener or a lover of them, then he is destroyed.

Indeed those that despise the people of knowledge want them

⁶⁷ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, p.30

⁶⁸ This was said by 'Umar Ibn 'Abdu'l-'Azīz reported by Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-'Ilm*, p.110

to be destroyed, and to extinguish the light of Allāh on earth. As a result their corruption and sin become rampant. It is feared that [for such people] their action will not be raised from them, as Sufyān al-Thawrī and others from the *Salaf* said.

Some of the servants of the ruler disliked Abū'l-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī, and they exerted much effort to harm him. One of them saw himself in a dream been carried to the Hell-fire; so he was asked why, and the reply he got was that 'He hated Ibn al-Jawzī.'

Ibn al-Jawzī said: 'When his bigotry and harm increased so much that it was intolerable, I turned to Allāh [for refuge] that He expose his flaws. Allāh destroyed him soon after.'

[7.1. Killing a Scholar is like killing a Successor of a Prophet (禁)]

When Ḥajjāj killed Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr, all of the people were in need of his knowledge. But Ḥajjāj prevented him [Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr] from benefiting the people. Thus, he was shown in his dream that Ḥajjāj was killed by every person he had murdered, and because of his killing of Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr alone, Ḥajjāj was killed seventy times.⁶⁹

Therefore the meaning (of the text) the most severe in punishment is the one who kills a Prophet, as a result he strives to cause corruption on the earth. Whoever kills a scholar then he has killed a successor of a Prophet. He is like a person striving to cause mischief on earth, for this reason Allāh placed the killing of Prophets and the scholars who enjoin the good together as in the statement of the Most High:

⁶⁹ Abū Nu'aym, *al-Hilyatu'l-Awliyā'*, 4/273.

وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيَّ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ
الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ
بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢١﴾

“Those who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh and kill the prophets without right and kill those who order justice from among the people—give them tidings of a painful punishment.”

[*Āl-Imrān* (3): 21]

‘Ikrimah and others among the *Salaf* said regarding the statement of the Most High:

مَنْ قَتَلَ
نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ
النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ
جَمِيعًا

“Whoever kills a person not in retaliation of murder, or for spreading corruption in the land—it is as if he had slain all of mankind. And whoever saves a life—it is as if he had saved humanity in its entirety.”

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 32]

Whoever kills a Prophet or an Imām of justice, it is as if he has killed all of mankind, and whoever strengthens a Prophet or an Imām of justice, then it is as if he has saved all of humanity.

[7.2. The Superiority of the Scholar over the Worshiper]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The superiority of the scholar over the worshiper is like the superiority of the full moon over the rest of the planets.”

This ḥadīth has also been narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) by way of the ḥadīth of Mu‘ādh (*raḍiy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and Abū Dardā’ (*raḍiy Allāhu ‘anhu*) but the chain of narrations for both are broken.⁷⁰

In this parable is the comparison of a scholar to the full moon. The full moon represents the scholar, when the moon is at its zenith, its beauty and splendour, illuminates with glowing light.

The comparison of a worshiper is to the planets. The difference between the virtue of the scholar and worshiper, is like that of the full moon and the other planets. The secret in this is, and Allāh knows best, the light of a planet does not go beyond itself. Whereas the light of the full moon sheds on all the inhabitants of the earth, covering them so they may use its light and be guided to find their way.

Rather the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “*Over all the planets.*” And he did not say over all the stars, because planets are not used for guid-

⁷⁰ Imām Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*, 5/192 and Tirmidhī, #2682 from the ḥadīth of Abū Dardā’ (*raḍiy Allāhu ‘anhu*). Abū ‘Īsā said: ‘We do not know this ḥadīth except from the ḥadīth of ‘Āsim Ibn Raja’ Ibn Haywā, and it is not connected. Likewise Maḥmūd Ibn Khadash has reported with this chain, and he narrates this ḥadīth from ‘Āsim Ibn Raja’ Ibn Haywā from Walīd Ibn Jamīl from Kathīr Ibn Qays from Abū Dardā’ (*raḍiy Allāhu ‘anhu*) from the Prophet (ﷺ), and this is the most authentic from the ḥadīth of Maḥmūd Ibn Khadash, and Muḥammad Ibn Isma‘īl held this to be most authentic.

ance, so they are on the same level as the worshiper whose benefit is limited to himself only, as for the stars then they are used for guidance as in the statement of the Most Exalted:

بِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

“By way of the stars that men find their way”

[*al-Nahl* (16):16]

And Allāh has said:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ

“And it is He Who placed for you the stars so that you might be guided by them through the midst of deep darkness of the land and sea.”

[*al-An‘ām* (6): 97]

Likewise the scholars of his nation have been compared to stars in the ḥadīth that has been aforementioned. It has also been reported that he said: “My Companions are like the stars; whichever of them you follow you will be guided.”⁷¹

It has also been suggested that the moon receives its light from the sun, in the same way the scholars have taken their light from the light of the divine message. For this reason the two have been compared.

The Messenger (ﷺ) was the shining bright light and a illuminat-

⁷¹ Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Razzaq in, *Jami‘ Bayān ul ‘Ilm*, 2/91. Imām Aḥmad said this narration was not correct, Imām Ibn ‘Abd Al-Barr said the chain of this narration is not reliable, Ibn Hazm declared the it to be disreputable, and al-Albānī, may Allāh have mercy on him, ruled on this ḥadīth, *Silsilah Aḥādīth al-Ḍa‘īfah*, #58 as fabricated.

ing moon cast upon the earth. The scholars, are his inheritors and successors, likened to the moon when it is at its complete brightness and full radiance.

[7.3. The Scholars are the First Group to Enter Paradise]

In al-Bukhārī, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Indeed the first group [of people] that will enter Paradise will resemble the full moon, and then those who follow them will be like a bright planets [or stars] in the sky.”⁷²

It is not far-fetched to imagine—and Allāh knows best—that the scholars will be from the first group, as they were in the world like a full bright moon to the people of the earth. They may be joined by the most devout and prominent worshipers, due to the fact people who heard about them benefitted from their accounts, their hearts were moved awakening them from slumber when they were mentioned, and they wanted to follow them. As for the second group then they are the normal worshipers.

When al-Awza‘ī died—he was the Imām of the People of *Shām* in knowledge along with his profound worship and great fear of Allāh the Most High—he was seen in a dream and he said: ‘I have not seen anything greater, then the rank of a person who possess knowledge and those individuals who have fear of Allāh.’

⁷² Bukhārī, #3327 and Muslim, #2834 from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah. (*raḍīy Allāhu ‘anhu*)

[7.4. The Superiority of Knowledge over Worship]

This ḥadīth proves beyond doubt the superiority of knowledge over worship, and in this regard there are numerous other proofs.

Allāh, the Most High said:

هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“Are those who know [be considered] equal to those who know not?”

[*al-Zumar* (39): 9]

And He said:

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

“Allāh raises those who believe from among you, and those that are given knowledge, to high ranks.”

[*al-Mujadilah* (58):11]

On those that believe and have not been given knowledge, this is what Ibn Mas‘ūd (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and others from the *Salaf* have said.

Tirmidhī relates a ḥadīth from Abū Umāmah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) from the Prophet (ﷺ): “Two men were mentioned to him, one of them was a worshipper, and the other was a scholar. So he (ﷺ) said: “The superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is like the superiority of me over the lowest (in rank) amongst

you.”⁷³

Tirmidhī said this ḥadīth is authentic.

He also reported⁷⁴ and Ibn Mājah⁷⁵ from the ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu ‘anhumā*), from the Prophet (ﷺ) who said: “One person of understanding (*faqīh*) is more severe on the devil than a thousand worshippers.”

Ibn Mājah reported from the ḥadīth of ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr (*raḍiyAllāhu ‘anhumā*) who said: “The Messenger of Allāh once left his house and entered the *Masjid*. He came upon two circles [of people]. One of which was reading Qur’ān and supplicating to Allāh, while the other was learning and teaching. He (ﷺ) said: “All of them are upon good. These are supplicating to Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, and reading the Qur’ān. If He wishes He will give them, and if He wills He will withhold it from them. As for these people they are learning and teaching, and I have been sent as a teacher. So he sat with them.”⁷⁶

Ibn al-Mubārak reported in his book, *al-Zuhd*⁷⁷ and added to it “I have been sent as a teacher”—These are better.

Ṭabarānī related a ḥadīth from Ibn ‘Amr (*raḍiyAllāhu ‘anhumā*),

⁷³ Tirmidhī, #2685. Tirmidhī said: ‘This ḥadīth is strange.’

⁷⁴ Tirmidhī, #2681. Tirmidhī said: ‘This ḥadīth is strange. We do not know it except from Walīd Ibn Muslim.’

⁷⁵ Ibn Mājah, #222.

⁷⁶ Ibn Mājah, #229. He said in *al-Zawa’id*: The chain is weak, Dāwūd, Bakr and ‘Abdu’l-Rahmān are all weak (narrators.)

⁷⁷ *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, #1388

from the Prophet (ﷺ) who said: “A small amount of knowledge (possessed by a believer) is superior then a lot of worship.”⁷⁸

Bazzār,⁷⁹ Ḥākim⁸⁰ and others have reported through many chains of narrations directly from the Prophet (ﷺ): “The superiority of knowledge is more beloved to Allāh than the superiority of worship, and the best of your religion is piety.”⁸¹

Imām Zuhri attributes the following saying to the Prophet (ﷺ) “The superiority of the scholar over the worshiper is seventy levels. Between each of the levels is the distance covered by a rapid horse over a period of a hundred years to travel.”

And narrations from the *Salaf* [in this regard] are abundant.

It has been narrated from Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and Abū Dharr (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that: ‘A chapter (of knowledge) a

⁷⁸ In *al-Awsaṭ*, #8698. Ṭabarānī said: ‘No one narrated this ḥadīth from Rajā’ Ibn Ḥaywa except Ishāq Abū ‘Abdu’l-Rahmān, Layth was alone in this (narration). Reported by Abū Nu‘aym in *al-Hilyatu’l-Awliyā’*, 5/173-174. He said the ḥadīth is strange from the ḥadīth of Rajā’, and Ishāq Ibn Asīd was also alone in this narration, and no one narrated from Rajā’ except his son.

⁷⁹ In *al-Musnad*, also in *Kashf al-Astar*, #139.

⁸⁰ Imām Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 1/92-93. He also authenticated it.

⁸¹ Abū Nu‘aym in *al-Hilyatu’l-Awliyā’*, 2/211-212. From the ḥadīth of Hudayfah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and Abū Nu‘aym said they have not narrated it connected from ‘Amash from Muṭrif from the Prophet (ﷺ) from other that Hudayfah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*), and Qatādah narrated it and Ḥumayd Ibn Ḥilāl from Muṭrif from his statement.

man learns is more beloved to us than a thousand voluntary unit of prayer.⁸²

Ibn Mājah related the ḥadīth of Abū Dharr (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) directly from the Prophet (ﷺ).

It has been narrated from Abū Dardā’ (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) who said: ‘Studying knowledge amongst each other for an hour is better than standing the whole night (in prayer).’⁸³

It has been narrated from Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) who said: ‘That I (try to seek) understanding for an hour is more beloved to me than I stay awake the whole night praying until morning.’⁸⁴

Also reported from him: ‘That I learn a chapter of knowledge about a command or prohibition, is more beloved to me than seventy battles in the way of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic.’⁸⁵

Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) said: ‘Studying knowledge for part of the night is more beloved to me than staying awake all night (in prayer).’⁸⁶

⁸² Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Barr in *Jamī’ Bayān al-‘Ilm*, #115, and Khaṭīb in *al-Faqīh wa’l-Mutafaqīh*, #51. Haythamī said in *al-Majma’*, 1/124: Narrated by al-Bazzār, in it is Hilāl Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Rahmān al-Ḥanafī, and he is abandoned.

⁸³ Al-Khaṭīb in *al-Faqīh wa’l-Mutafaqīh*, #54. The chain is muadhal.

⁸⁴ Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Barr in *Jamī’ Bayān al-‘Ilm*, #109—from Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) as mawqūf. In the chain is Yazīd Ibn ‘Iyāḍ who is a liar.

⁸⁵ Al-Khaṭīb in *al-Faqīh wa’l-Mutafaqīh*, #52.

⁸⁶ Dārimī in *Sunan*, 1/82.

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said: 'For me to sit in a gathering of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd is better for my soul than doing actions of Sunnah [i.e worshiping].'⁸⁷

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'For me to learn an aspect of knowledge, and teach it to another Muslim, is more beloved to me than having the whole world at my disposal to use in the way of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic.'⁸⁸

Also reported from him: 'A man who comprehends an aspect of knowledge, then he acts by that knowledge, is better than the world and what it contains, even if he was given the whole world and used all of it for the Hereafter.'⁸⁹

He also said: 'The ink of the scholars and blood of the martyrs flow as one.'

Furthermore he said: 'Amongst the things that Allāh has created nothing is greater with Allāh than the rewards he has set for the one seeking knowledge, neither *Ḥajj*, nor *ʿUmrah*, nor *Jihad*, nor *Zakat*, nor freeing a slave. If knowledge was an image it would be better than the sun; the moon; stars; the sky and a throne.'

Al-Zuhri said: 'Learning the Sunnah is better than two hundred years of worship.'

Sufyān al-Thawrī and Abū Ḥanīfah said: 'There is nothing better after the obligatory acts of worship than seeking knowledge.'

⁸⁷ Al-Dhahabi in *Sīyar al-A'lām an-Nubulā'*, 1/493.

⁸⁸ Al-Khaṭīb in *al-Faqīh wa'l-Mutafaqīh*, #53.

⁸⁹ Ibn Abī Shaybah, #17050

Sufyān also said: 'We do not know of anything from the actions better than seeking knowledge and ḥadīth, for the one whose intention is good.' It was asked: 'What should the intention be for?' He said: 'He should want to please Allāh and desire the hereafter (by his actions).'⁹⁰

Imām Shāfi'ī said: 'Seeking knowledge is better than voluntary prayer.'⁹¹

Imām Mālik saw some of his companions writing knowledge, then he left it, to stand and pray. He said: 'So strange of you! (to do that), the thing you stood for, is not better than the thing you left it for.'⁹²

Imām Aḥmad was asked: 'Which one is more beloved to you, to pray during the night voluntarily or to sit copying down knowledge?' He said: 'If what you copy down is knowledge that you know from the affair of your religion, then that is more beloved to me.'⁹³

Imām Aḥmad also said: 'Nothing equates to knowledge.'

Mu'āfi Ibn 'Imrān said: 'Writing down one ḥadīth is more beloved to me than standing for the night prayer.'⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Abū Nu'aym in *al-Ḥilyatu'l-Awliyā'*, 6/366

⁹¹ Abū Nu'aym in *al-Ḥilyatu'l-Awliyā'*, 9/119

⁹² Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr, p.155

⁹³ Al-Khaṭīb in *al-Faqīh wa'l-Mutafaqīh*, 1/17.

⁹⁴ Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr, p.15

CHAPTER EIGHT

[The Virtues of Sacred Knowledge]

Among what proves that sacred knowledge is more virtuous than all voluntary acts of worship, is that knowledge gathers all the different virtues of all other deeds of devotional worship.

Knowledge is the best type of remembrance, as has been expounded on before, and it is the best form of *Jibād*.

It has been narrated from the ḥadīth of ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*)⁹⁵ and Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) from the Prophet (ﷺ) directly: “The ink of the scholars will be weighed against the blood of the martyr’s. The ink of the scholars will outweigh it.”⁹⁶

Tirmidhī reported from the ḥadīth of Anas (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) from the Prophet (ﷺ): “Whoever goes out to seek knowledge then he is (going out) in the way of Allāh.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ In *al-Aṣḥ* it is ‘Amr. This is a mistake. What is verified, is from *Tārikh Baghdād*.

⁹⁶ Al-Khaṭīb reported in *Tārikh Baghdād*, 2/193 from the ḥadīth of ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*).

⁹⁷ Tirmidhī, #2647

In another ḥadith it has been mentioned: "If death comes to the seeker of knowledge then he will die as a martyr."⁹⁸

Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal (*raḍīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said: 'Seek knowledge for indeed seeking it for Allāh is a good deed.⁹⁹ Seeking it is worship; studying it is glorification; researching is striving in the way of Allāh; teaching it to the one that does not know it is charity. Exerting effort for its people is a drawing nearness to Allāh, this is because knowledge is a path to the many levels of paradise. It is a comfort in a time of loneliness; a friend in times of strangeness; and provides comfort in times of solitude. It is a guide through prosperity; an aid in times of adversity, a weapon against the enemy; an adornment amongst friends. With it Allāh raises up a group of people placing them among the best of leaders, that have legends told about them; and have their achievements followed closely. Their opinion are always sought; the angels are eager to touch them with their wings; and every moist and dry patch seeks forgiveness for them. The fish and creatures in the sea; and the animals on land all seek blessings for him. Because knowledge gives life to the hearts from ignorance; brightens eyes in the darkness, and strengthens the body from weakness. Through that the servant reaches the elevated levels of the righteous and piety in this world and the Hereafter. Reflecting upon knowledge equates to fasting and studying it equates to standing (in prayer).

⁹⁸ Bazzār, #138— *Kashf al-'Astār*, and Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr in *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Fadlu*, #115, and al-Khaṭīb in *al-Faqīh wa'l-Mutafaqīh*, #51, and Ya'qūb Ibn Sufyān in *Al-Ma'rifa wa'l-Tārikh*, 3/499 from Abū Salamah, from Abū Hurayrah (*raḍīy Allāhu 'anhu*) and Abū Dharr (*raḍīy Allāhu 'anhu*) Marfū'. Haythamī said in *Al-Majma'*, 1/124: Narrated by Bazzār and in it is Ḥilāl Ibn 'Abdu'l-Rahmān Al-Hanafi and he is abandoned.

⁹⁹ This is what is in *Al-Asl*, and in *al-Faqīh wa'l-Mutafaqīh*, #50, and in *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Fadlu* of Ibn 'Abdu'l Barr: The word is: *Khashyah* (humility).

Through it the ties of kinship are kept, the lawful and unlawful are known. It is the leader of actions; and the one who acts is inspired by the successful and ignored by the wretched.¹⁰⁰

Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr narrated (in what can be paraphrased as): 'Through it (knowledge) Allāh is known and worshipped; through it He is glorified and singled out in worship. Allāh raises through knowledge nations, makes them leaders of mankind, who are followed, and whose views are sought after. This has been narrated from the narration of Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) directly from the Prophet (ﷺ).¹⁰¹

[8.1. The Superiority of Adam over the Angels]

From the things that clearly show the virtue of knowledge over worship, is the story of Adam (*'alayhi as-salām*). Allāh, the Most High, showed Adam's (*'alayhi as-salām*) virtue over the angels through knowledge, He taught him the names of everything, and the angels acknowledged their lack of knowledge. So when Adam informed them of the names his virtue over them manifested itself. Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic said:

أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَّكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا
تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

"He said: 'Did I not tell you that I know the Unseen [aspects] of the heavens and earth, and I know what you reveal and what you hide?'"

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 33]

¹⁰⁰ Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr in *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm*, #268: The servant reaches with knowledge.

¹⁰¹ Reported by Al-Khaṭīb in *al-Faqīh wa'l-Mutafaqīh*, #50

A group of the *Salaf* mentioned that the thing that the angels were concealing was the fact that they thought to themselves that Allāh would not create another creation nobler than them.

Something else that shows the virtue of knowledge is that Jibrīl (*'alayhi as-salām*) has been preferred over the other angels that are busy with worship. Because of knowledge that Jibrīl (*'alayhi as-salām*) has been given, which is specific to him, he is one who brings down revelation to the prophets, peace be upon all of them.

Likewise some of the prominent Messengers were given virtue over other Prophets, because of their amplified knowledge, which means they had more knowledge of Allāh and fear of Him.

For this reason Allāh, the Exalted has described Muḥammad (ﷺ) in His Book and praised him as being chosen and distinguished with knowledge, which is specific to him. He reminds him of it many times, and Allāh orders him to teach it to the believers.

So the first of what he mentioned of knowledge and teaching it, is the story of Ibrāhīm (*'alayhi as-salām*). When he prayed to his Lord for the people of the sacred house that He send among them a Messenger that would recite onto them His verses and purify them. In order to teach them the Book and Wisdom. Then He reminds them that He has indeed sent a Messenger among themselves and he is Muḥammad (ﷺ) with this description:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَزُكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٦٦﴾

“Indeed, Allāh bestowed a great favour to the believers when He sent a Messenger to them from among themselves. Reciting to them His verses, purifying them and teaching them the Book as well as Wisdom, even though before that they were clearly lost in error.”

[*Āl-‘Imran* (3): 164]

The first thing that was revealed to Muḥammad (ﷺ) was the mention of knowledge and its virtue. It is the statement the Most High:

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۝ (١) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝ (٢) اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ
الْأَكْرَمُ ۝ (٣) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۝ (٤) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۝ (٥)

“Read, In the Name of your Lord that created. (He) Created man from a clot [of blood]. Read, and your Lord is Most Honourable. The One who taught [man] with the [use of a] pen, taught man what he did not know.”

[*Al-‘Alāq* (96): 1-5]

Allāh has reminded Muḥammad (ﷺ) of His favour of knowledge in many places (in the Qur’ān) such as His statement:

وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ
مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ۝ (١١٣)

“Allāh has revealed upon you the Book and Wisdom and taught you what you knew not. And the bounty of Allāh upon you is great.”

[*al-Nisā’* (4):113]

He has ordered him to ask his lord to increase him in knowledge:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ﴿١٥٦﴾

“Say: ‘My Lord, increase me in knowledge.’”

[*Taba* (20): 114]

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to say: “I am the most knowledgeable of you concerning Allāh and the one who has the most fear of Him.”¹⁰²

Allāh, the Exalted has reminded us that He has sent among us His Messenger (ﷺ) the one who teaches us what we do not know. He has ordered us to give thanks for His favour, as He has said:

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ فَأَذْكُرُونِي
أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُون ﴿١٥٨﴾

“Just as We have sent among you a Messenger from yourselves, reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and Wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know before. Remember Me - I will remember you. Give thanks to Me and do not be ungrateful.”

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 151-152]

He the Glorified has informed us that He has indeed created the heavens and the earth and sent down His command in order that we may have know of His power and have knowledge, so

¹⁰² Bukhārī, #20, Muslim, #2356 on the authority of ‘A’ishah (*radīyAllāhu ‘anha*). Also reported by Bukhārī, #5063, on the authority of Anas (*radīyAllāhu ‘anhu*).

that it may be a guide towards knowing Him and His attributes. As His statement says:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ﴿١٢﴾

“It is Allāh who has created seven heavens and of the earth, the like of them. [His] Command descends among them so you may know that Allāh has power over all things and that Allāh has encompassed all things in knowledge.”

[*al-Talāq* (65): 12]

[8.2. The Scholars are those who Truly Fear Allāh]

Allāh has praised the scholars in His Book in many places, some of them have been highlighted previously, and He has also informed us that those who fear Him most from His servants are the scholars, and they are the ones that have knowledge of Him.

Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) said regarding the statement (of Allāh):

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

“Indeed from His servants who fear Allāh the most are the scholars.”

[*Fāṭir* (35): 28]

saying: ‘Indeed the one who fears Me from My Servants is the one who knows My Majesty and My Greatness.’

[8.3. The Best of Knowledge is the Knowledge of Allāh]

So the best of knowledge is the knowledge of Allāh, which is knowledge of His Names (*Asmā'*) and Attributes (*Ṣifāt*); and His Actions (*Af'āl*) which means the person (knowing them) will know Allāh and have fear of Him; love for Him; have awe of Him and veneration for His greatness; relying upon Him and trusting in Him, being pleased with Him, and busying themselves with Him away from His creation.

What follows on from that, is knowledge of His Angels; His Books; His Messengers; The Last Day including all the details that go with it. Knowledge of His Commands and Prohibitions; His rulings; what He likes from the speech of His servant and what He dislikes from His servant's speech and their overt and covert actions.

So whosoever gathers these branches of knowledge then he is from the most grounded of scholars, who have knowledge of Allāh and His Affair.

They are more complete than the ones that fall short in their knowledge of Allāh besides their knowledge of His affair and vice versa. This viewpoint has been witnessed from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sa'īd Ibn Al-Musayyib, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Imām Aḥmad and their like. Also from Mālīk Ibn Dinār, Fuḍayl Ibn 'Iyād, Ma'rūf al-Karkhī, Bishr al-Ḥāfi, and others from those that have much knowledge.

Whoever weighs up both situations will realize the virtue of scholars with His affair only, this is crystal clear. As for some

ignorant people who have no knowledge, they think that the worshippers are better than the scholars. Because they imagine that the scholars are only scholars of Allāh's Commandments, and that the worshippers are scholars of Allāh alone. So they give preference to worshippers over scholars, and this is the truth.

We say: Indeed the scholars of Allāh and of His affair are better than the worshippers. So if the worshippers are from the scholars of Allāh, then they share with the worshippers the virtue of having knowledge of Allāh, maybe even having more than them, but they have an advantage over them with their knowledge of his affair, and by virtue of calling the creation to Allāh and guiding them. This is the station of the messengers, peace be upon them. Similarly, they are successors of the Messengers and their inheritors as we will discuss later, if Allāh the Exalted wills.

[8.4. The Knowledge of the Scholar is more Superior than the Worship of the Worshipper]

When you compare the prestige the scholars, due to knowledge they possess, to the prestige of the worshippers, due to the voluntary acts of worship they do. The prestige of the scholars is better and more superior. Increased knowledge in Allāh and what He has revealed to His Messenger (ﷺ) necessitates an increase in knowledge of Allāh and faith. The category of knowledge of Allāh and faith (*īmān*), is better than the category of actions with the limbs. However, he who has no knowledge sees in himself that acts of worship are greater than knowledge, because he fails to comprehend the reality of knowledge and its nobility. Therefore he has no power over it, hence he does not comprehend the reality of acts of worship, as he does not have the ability to do so.

For such reasons you will often find that those that do not have knowledge will give preference to abstaining from worldly things (*zuhd*) over sciences and knowledge. The reason is as we have mentioned. Which means he does not truly comprehend the meaning of knowledge and awareness. Whosoever does not comprehend something his heart does not affirm its importance. Rather the ignorant person comprehends the reality of the world, and his heart gives it importance and reverence. Therefore in his assessment of the ignorant, the one who leaves the world seems more important and virtuous to him.

Muḥammad Ibn Wasī' once saw a youth¹⁰³ to whom it was said: 'These are the people of asceticism (*zuhd*)' so he said: 'What is the world actually worth, that the people who abstain from it are praised?'

Abū Sulaymān al-Daranī said something similar in meaning to this also, for the one that takes pride in *zuhd* is as if he is taking pride in leaving something insignificant of something which is even less (in worth) with Allāh than the wing of a gnat. This is almost not even worth mentioning, let alone to take pride in.

For the same reason many people are amazed when miracles and other extraordinary events are mentioned. They see those events as better than what the scholars have been given from knowledge; rather they (only) conceive the reality of miracles, because they are from the type of power and authority in the world which most people lack.

As for the scholars, then they do not give much importance to miracles. In fact they hold the view that to abstain from them is

¹⁰³ The word young boy is from another manuscript.

better. They consider it a type of trial and tribulation when the world is opened up to the servants. They fear being preoccupied by it (i.e. the dunya) and cutting away from Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic.

Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī has mentioned to this affect in his book from many of those people who were aware of such matters such as Abū Yazid Bustāmī; Yahyā Ibn Mu'adh; Saḥl (al-Tustarī)¹⁰⁴; Dhu'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī; (and Junayd)¹⁰⁵ and others.

It was said to one of them: 'So and so walks on water.' So he said: 'Whosoever Allāh enables to overcome his desires is better.'

Abū Ḥafs al-Naysaburī was once sitting with his friends outside Madīnah. While he was speaking to them and they felt good, a wild mountain goat came down from the mountain and kneeled in front of them. So he cried a lot and became upset. When he was asked why he cried, he replied: 'I saw your gathering around me and that you were happy. So it occurred to me that if only I had a lamb that I could sacrifice and call you to eat it. While I was thinking about this, a wild animal came and kneeled in front of me. Then I imagined myself like Pharaoh, the one who asked his Lord to let the Nile flow for him so he made it to flow. I said (to myself) what will give me safety, if Allāh gives me all of my portion (of reward) in this world and there is nothing left for me in the Hereafter. This is what made me upset.'

So the condition of those that had experience in these matters indicates that they were not distracted by miracles. Rather they

¹⁰⁴ From the printed version.

¹⁰⁵ From the printed version.

gave importance to knowing Allāh; fearing Him; loving Him; being close to Him; and were eager to meet Him and being obedient to Him. The scholars share¹⁰⁶ in that but have more knowledge than them of Allāh's affair, and calling mankind to Him.

This is the great bounty with Allāh; His Angels and His Messengers as some of the *Salaf* said: 'Whoever acts; learns and teaches then he will be called a great person in the realms of the heavens.'

When virtue of the scholar over the worshipper becomes manifest and clear, then that virtue is intended by way of more knowledge. As for the worshipper without knowledge then he is blameworthy.

This is why the *Salaf* likened him with a person not walking along the path, because he is doing more harm than good. He is like a donkey in the mill. He goes round and round until he destroys himself out of exhaustion and he does not leave his place.

This is very clear and apparent than needing further explaining.

¹⁰⁶ In the printed version: "*they shared with them*"

CHAPTER NINE

[A Comprehensive Parable]

Let us strike a comprehensive parable that shows the condition of all the creation regarding the call of the Messenger (ﷺ). Humanity is divided up in their response to him: the honest one who strive to be foremost, the one who is moderate and the one who oppresses his own soul. With this we will witness the virtue of how the scholars establish themselves over the rest of mankind. So we say:

That the Prophet's (ﷺ) likeness is like that of a messenger that comes from a great king and delivers the message to the rest of mankind. The people see his honesty as a messenger and that he has delivered the message from the great king to his subjects is assured.

This king shows kindness like no other, nor is there justice more complete than his, or authority whose grip is more severe than his. All of his subjects will be summoned to stand before him. So whoever comes (to his court) with an account of good, will be rewarded with the best of rewards. Whoever comes to him with a record of wrongdoing (evil crimes), then he will be punished severely. He will inform his servants that he likes such and such, and dislikes such and such. He does not leave out anything that the subjects have done. The messenger informs them about what the king would like from them and dislike. He orders them to prepare

for the journey going to the place of the king for a permanent stay and he admonishes them, that everywhere else will be destroyed except his abode. Whoever delays the preparations to travel to him, the king will send a messenger who will warn them of destruction in their (temporary) place of residence. He will relate from him the worst condition. And will describe the attributes of the king with the most beautiful description of; perfection, majesty and generosity.

The people fall into many categories when it comes to responding to the call of this messenger, who is calling them to the king:

From them are those who adhere to the call, and their only concern is what the king likes from his subjects, and what provisions they should take with them on his journey to the king.

So they became busy with purifying themselves for Him, and calling others who they can call from the creation for this inevitable journey to the king. They are concerned about what the king dislikes, so that they may stay away from it and order people to do the same. They make their greatest concern asking about the attributes of the king; his greatness and generosity, so with that (knowledge) their love and admiration for this king increases; as well as their eagerness to meet Him. So they set out to meet the king accompanying with them souls that they are able to take with them, those the king likes and is pleased with. Accompanying them are great convoy of people like themselves, all going to the place of the king.

From this we can deduce, that the truthful messenger, is the quickest route to reach the king and what provisions the traveller needs. He acts accordingly along the journey, he and whoever follows him.

This is the description of the grounded scholars that are rightly guided and guide the creation with them to the path of Allāh. These people are traveling on path towards Allāh, like the absent person returning home to his family who are waiting for his arrival, longing for him.

Others are busy getting prepared to travel to the king by themselves not making time to have others accompany them. This is the description of worshippers that learn what benefits themselves only, and are occupied by what is required of them.

Another type are people that resemble neither of the two previous groups of people. They make apparent to people that they are with them, and that their intention is to gather provisions for the journey. When in reality their intention is to settle down in the place that is going to be destroyed. They are the scholars and worshippers that like showing off with their actions, so to obtain the short-term benefits of the place where they are settled in. The condition of such people with the greatest king is that when they finally do come before him, they will be in the worst of conditions. It will be said to them: Go and seek reward for your actions from the people you did your actions for, because you have left nothing with us. They will be the first people who will enter the hell fire.

Another type are people that understand what the messenger wants from the king's message, however they are overtaken by laziness and inactivity and do not take any provisions for the journey. They do not adhere to what the king likes and what he dislikes.

These people are the scholars that do not act upon their knowledge; they are on the verge of destruction. It might even be the case that others benefit from their knowledge of the path and its description. Hence their students learn (knowledge) and are suc-

cessful on this path. Yet they are cut off from those that they took the knowledge of the path from and they (the people who did not act according to what they knew) are left behind to be destroyed.

Another type are those that confirm what the Messenger called to as truthful, however they failed to learn the path, or the details about what the king likes and dislikes. They embark on the journey by themselves, throwing themselves onto paths full of dangers, which are unsafe and hazardous roads. Most of them perish or are cut off from the path and thus will not reach the place of the king. These people are the ignorant ones, that acted [or did deeds] without knowledge.

Another type are those that do not pay any attention to the messenger, or are careless about the message. They are preoccupied with themselves only, and what benefits them. Continuing heedlessly in the place that the messenger said was going to be destroyed. Some of these people are the ones that completely deny the messenger. Others of them only say they accept him with their speech, but in reality they do not occupy themselves with learning and ignore his teachings and what it means through actions. These people are the majority of mankind that turn away from knowledge and actions. From them are the disbelievers, hypocrites and the sinners that oppress their own souls.

They will not realize until a caller from the king knocks on their door, takes them away from their dwellings, and summon them to the presence of the king. So they come to him as a runaway slave, that returns to his angry master.

If you ponder over all these types of people, you will not find a nobler or closer group to the king than the well grounded scholars, as they are the best of creation after the Messengers.

CHAPTER TEN

[The Inheritors of the Prophets]

As for the Prophet's (ﷺ) saying: "Indeed the scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets."

Meaning they inherit what the Prophets came with from knowledge. They succeed the Prophets among their followers with calling them to Allāh and His obedience. And they forbid them from what Allāh has made sinful and defend His religion.

Hasan al-Baṣrī attributes the following saying to the Prophet (ﷺ): 'May Allāh's mercy be upon my successors.' They asked: 'Who are your successors, O Messenger of Allāh?' He replied: 'Those that revive my Sunnah after me and teach it to the servants of Allāh.'

Something similar has been narrated from the ḥadīth¹⁰⁷ of 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) directly from the Prophet (ﷺ) also.

¹⁰⁷ Reported from al-Ramuhurmuzī in *al-Muḥadith al-Fasil*, 1/163 from 'Alī (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*). Dhahabī said in *Al-Mizān*, 1/270, this is false. Daylamī mentioned in *Firdous al-Akḥbar*, 1/489 with the wording: 'O Allāh have mercy on my successors, those that narrate my ḥadīth and my Sunnah, and teach it to the people.'

The scholars have the same standing as the Messengers have between Allāh and His creation, as Ibn Al-Munkadir said: 'Indeed the scholar is between Allāh and His creation, so be careful how you enter upon them.'¹⁰⁸

Sufyān Ibn 'Uyanah said: 'The people with the greatest rank are those that are between Allāh and His creation: The Prophets and the scholars.'¹⁰⁹

Sahl al-Ṭastarī said: 'Whoever wishes to see the gatherings of the prophets then let him look to the gatherings of the scholars. A man comes and said: 'O so and so, what do you say about a man that takes an oath over his wife with such and such, so (the uneducated) says: 'She has been divorced.' Then another man comes and said: 'What do you say about a man that takes an oath over his wife with such and such?' So he replies: 'He has done wrong by making this statement. This question is for none other than a prophet or a scholar, so recognize them as such.'¹¹⁰

[10.1. The Rank of the Scholars]

A woman saw another woman, who was a worshipper in the time of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, being asked about a woman who bleeds from a blood vessel, but not menstruating blood, so it was said to her: 'Are you seeking an answer and among you is Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and in his hand is the seal of Jibrīl (*'alayhi as-salām*)?'

¹⁰⁸ Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Hilyatu'l-Awliyā'*, 3/153.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faḡīb*, 1/35

¹¹⁰ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faḡīb*, 1/35

Here is a reference to the fact that Ḥasan inherited what Jibril (*alayhi as-salām*) came with from the revelation, this is his seal.

One of the scholars saw the Prophet (ﷺ) in his dream so he said to him: 'O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) we have disagreed about who is more knowledgeable Mālik or Layth?' So he replied: 'Mālik inherited my knowledge.'

Another saw in his dream the Prophet (ﷺ) sitting in the *Masjid*, with people around him, while Mālik was standing in front of the Prophet (ﷺ) and in front of him was musk. He (ﷺ) was taking a handful of musk and giving it to Mālik, then Mālik was going around and spreading it among the people. This dream was interpreted to mean that Mālik was honoured with sacred knowledge and following the Sunnah.

Fuḍayl Ibn 'Iyāḍ saw the Prophet (ﷺ) in his dream sitting, and to his side was a space. So a man came in order to sit in that space, so the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: 'This is the sitting of Ishāq Ibn al-Fazārī.'

One of them was asked: 'Who is better, Abū Ishāq or Fuḍayl?' So he (ﷺ) said: 'Fuḍayl was his own man, and Abū Ishāq was a man for the general people.' Referring to the fact that he was a scholar and benefitted the people with his knowledge. Whereas Fuḍayl was a worshiper and his benefit was for himself.¹¹¹

The scholars in the Hereafter will follow the Prophets in intercession, as in Tirmidhī, reports from 'Uthmān (*raḍiy Allāhu 'anhu*)

¹¹¹ Abū Nu'aym, *Al-Hilyatu'l-Awliyā'*, 8/254.

from the Prophet (ﷺ): “On the Day of Judgment the Prophets will intercede, then the scholars, and then the martyrs.”¹¹²

Mālik Ibn Dinār said: ‘It has reached me that it will be said to the worshiper: ‘Enter Paradise’, whereas it will be said to the scholar: ‘Stop so you can intercede (for others).’ This has been narrated directly from the Prophet (ﷺ) from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) with a weak chain of narration.¹¹³

The scholars have spoken regarding the standing (on the Day of Judgment) when the affairs become confusing to people, so when the people of the standing (on the Day of Judgment) think that they did not stay in their graves for more than an hour, the people of knowledge explained that, this is not the case:

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لِيُؤَاخِرَ سَاعَتِي
كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ
لَقَدْ لَبِثْنَا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ فَهَذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ
وَلَا كُنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

“And on the Day the Last Hour appears, the evil-doers will swear they had not remained longer than an hour. This is the extent to which they deluded themselves. But those who were given knowledge

¹¹² Did not find it in Tirmidhī, in fact it has been reported by Ibn Mājah, #4313. Bayhaqī mentioned it in *Shu‘ab al-Imān*, #1707 and said: ‘We have narrated in the issue of intercession from the book, *al-Ba‘ath* from ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) directly from the Prophet (ﷺ). Daylamī mentioned in *Firdous*, 5/519 from him also.

¹¹³ Al-Khaṭīb in *Al-Faḥīḥ wa’l-Mutaḥaḥīḥ*, #68 on the authority of Anas (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) and also reported, #69 on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*).

and faith will say, 'Indeed, you have stayed according to the Decree of Allāh, until the Day of Resurrection, and this is the Day of Resurrection, but you [were determined] not to know it!'"

[*al-Rūm* (30): 55-56]

The scholars will announce on the Day of Judgment about the humiliation of the polytheists as in the saying of the Exalted:

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَاءِ الَّذِينَ
كُنْتُمْ تُشْفِقُونَ فِيهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّ الْخِزْيَ
الْيَوْمَ وَالسَّوَاءَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

"Then, on the Day of Resurrection, He will disgrace them and say, 'Where are My [so called] 'partners' for whose sake you used to oppose [the believers]?' Those who were given knowledge will say, 'Indeed, today there is disgrace and evil [shame and misery] for the disbelievers'"

[*al-Nahl* (16): 27]

It has been narrated directly from the Prophet (ﷺ): "Indeed the people will be in need of the scholars even in Paradise, just as they were in need of them in the world. When the Lord calls the people of paradise to visit Him, He will say to them; 'Ask me whatever you want', so they will turn to the scholars, who will say: 'Ask to see Him', for there is nothing in Paradise greater than that."¹¹⁴

All of this makes clear that after the status of the Prophets, there is nothing more virtuous in rank than the status of the scholars.

¹¹⁴ Dhahabi mentioned in *al-Mizān*, 6/22 on the authority of Jābir (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) directly from the Prophet (ﷺ), and Dhahabī said: 'This is fabricated.'

[10.2. The Scholars are the Allies of Allāh]

The term '*scholars*' is used to refer to the inclusion of the Prophets among them, as in the statement of the Exalted:

شَهِدَ
اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ

“Allāh bears witnesses that there is no god except Him, and [so do] the angels and those who possess knowledge—[that He is] maintaining [the creation] in justice.”

[*Al-Imrān* (3):18]

The Prophets were not singled out for mentioning, rather they were included under the term scholars. This is sufficient of an honour for the scholars that they are addressed with a term that puts them together with the Prophets.

Someone said: Indeed the scholars that act upon what they know they are the close friends of Allāh. As Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Shāfi‘ī said: ‘If the scholars and the scholars of *fiqh* are not the friends of Allāh, then Allāh has no friends.’¹¹⁵

Imām Aḥmad said: ‘The People of ḥadīth are the ones that are truly the close allies of Allāh.’¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Faqīh*, 1/35

¹¹⁶ Al-Khaṭīb, *Sharaf Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth*, p.50.

[10.3. The Scholars Inherit from the Prophets]

The statement of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Indeed, the Prophets do not leave behind gold or silver coins to be inherited; rather, they leave behind knowledge, so whoever takes it has taken a good portion.”

What is intended here is that the scholars are the ones that inherit knowledge from the Prophets in what they leave behind, and that is beneficial knowledge. So whoever takes from this knowledge has acquired a great portion and is envied by others.

Ibn Mas‘ūd (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) saw some people in the *Masjid* learning. A person said: ‘Upon what have they gathered?’ He replied: ‘They have gathered in order to obtain the inheritance of Muḥammad (ﷺ), which they are sharing between themselves.’

Abū Hurayrah (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) once left the *Masjid* and went to the marketplace and said: ‘You have left the inheritance of Muḥammad (ﷺ) to be divided by the people of the *Masjid* while you are here!’¹¹⁷ The Prophet (ﷺ) has left behind his inheritance which is this book (Qur’ān) and the Sunnah, that explains and makes clear its meanings.

In Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī reported from Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhumā*) that he was asked: ‘Did the Prophet (ﷺ) leave anything?’ He said: ‘He did not leave anything except what is between the two covers of the book [Qur’ān].’¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Haythamī in *Majma’*, 1/124 and he said: ‘Related by Ṭabarānī in *al-Awsaṭ*, and the chain of narration is good.

¹¹⁸ Bukhārī, #5019.

In both Bukhārī and Muslim Ibn Abū Awfa reported that he was asked: 'Did the Messenger (ﷺ) leave anything behind to be inherited?' He said: 'He left behind the book of Allāh.'¹¹⁹

The Prophet (ﷺ) gave a sermon when he returned from the farewell pilgrimage and said: "Indeed I am a man. Death is about to approach me. I have left among you two things: the first of which is the book of Allāh, in it there is guidance and light. Who-soever holds on to it is upon guidance and whosoever errs from it, is misguided."¹²⁰

Imām Aḥmad reported that 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr (*radīy Allāhu 'anhumā*) said: "The Messenger (ﷺ) came out one day as if it was a farewell and said: 'I am the illiterate Prophet', he said that three times. 'There is no prophet after me, I have been given eloquent and concise speech. I know how many angels there are guarding the Hell-fire and how many there are carrying the throne. My *um-mah* has been pardoned. So listen and obey as long as I am among you. When I am taken away then it is incumbent upon you to hold onto the Book of Allāh, make permissible what it makes permissible, and forbid what it makes forbidden."¹²¹

The Prophet's (ﷺ) statement: "Indeed the Prophets do not leave gold or silver coins to be inherited, rather they leave knowledge."

What is meant by this is that they only inherit knowledge, and this explains the statement of the Most Exalted:

¹¹⁹ Bukhārī, #5022 and Muslim, #1634

¹²⁰ Muslim, #2408

¹²¹ Imām Aḥmad, al-Musnad, 2/172.

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمٰنُ دَاوُدَ

“And Sulaymān inherited from Dāwūd.”

[*al-Naml* (27):16]

And the statement of the Most High:

فَهَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۖ يَرِثُنِي وَيَرِثْ
مِنْ اٰلِ يَعْقُوْبَ

“So give me a heir from You. Who will be my inheritor and the inheritor from the family of Jacob.”

[*Maryam* (19): 5-6]

What is intended here is the inheritance of knowledge and Prophethood, not wealth. This is because the Prophets do not gather wealth for it to be left.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whatever I leave after me (excluding the adequate support of my wives and the wages of my employees) is given in charity.”¹²²

“He did not leave anything other except a shield; his weapons; a white mule and some land which was given as charity.”¹²³

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not leave anything behind other than a tool, and the land he and his family would grow their food on. He gave it all in charity.

¹²² Bukhāri, #3096, Muslim, #1760 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (radīyAllāhu ‘anhu).

¹²³ Bukhāri, #2739 on the authority of ‘Amr Ibn Al-Hārith (radīyAllāhu ‘anhu).

All of this shows that the Messengers were not sent to gather worldly things so it could be inherited by their families, rather they were sent to call people to Allāh; struggle in His way and to spread beneficial knowledge and to leave that knowledge for their nations.

Abū Muslim al-Khulānī attributes to the Prophet (ﷺ): “Allāh has not revealed (guidance) to me so that I should gather wealth and be a merchant, rather He revealed (guidance) to me so that I glorify and praise Him and be from those that prostrate themselves (before Him) in admiration; and worship Allāh until death comes.”¹²⁴

In Tirmidhī and others it is reported on the authority of Ibn Mas‘ūd (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “What do I want from this world? Indeed my similitude and the world is like that of a rider who takes shade under a tree, for a short while to rest, then leaves it to carry on his journey.”¹²⁵

Hence, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets. The Prophets do not leave gold or silver coins to be inherited, rather they leave knowledge.”¹²⁶

In this ḥadīth is a suggestion of two issues:

One of them is that: the scholar is the true inheritor of the Messenger. As they inherit knowledge they must leave it for others to inherit as the Messengers did for them. They can do this by teaching or authoring books, and things of that nature that can

¹²⁴ Abū Nu‘aym, *Al-Ḥilyatu’l-ʿAwliyā’*, 2/131. See *Surah al-Ḥijr* (15):99

¹²⁵ Tirmidhī, #2377, Ḥākim, 4/310 and Imām Aḥmad, *al-Musnad*, 1/391.

¹²⁶ Ibn Ḥibbān, #255

be benefitted from.

In Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim it has been reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When the servant dies (all) his actions are cut off except from three (sources): Beneficial knowledge; continuous charity, or a righteous child that supplicates for him."¹²⁷

Hence the scholar that teaches the one who will establish that knowledge after him, has left behind beneficial knowledge and continuous charity. Because teaching knowledge is charity, as preceded with Mu'adh (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) and others. Those they teach are on the same level as their righteous children supplicating for them. So by him leaving behind knowledge he achieves all three of these qualities.

Secondly: from the completeness of the inheritance that the scholar inherits, from the Messenger (ﷺ), is that the scholar does not leave any worldly gain behind. Just like the Prophet (ﷺ) did not leave any. This is generally how to follow the way of the prophet (ﷺ), in his abstinence from worldly things, taking little from it and sufficing with less.

Ṣaḥl al-Tustarī every so often would say: 'Among the signs of loving the Sunnah and the Hereafter, is dislike of the world, only taking from it enough provisions to reach the Hereafter.'

Mālik Ibn Dinār said: 'Indeed the scholar is the one that if you visit him at home, you will not find him dividing his house for you. You will find his prayer mat and Qur'ān to one side of his house and you will see the effects of the Hereafter.'

¹²⁷ Muslim, #1231

Fuḍayl used to say: 'Beware of the scholar who is chasing after the world, misguiding you with his intoxication.' Then he further elaborated: 'Many of your scholars attire resembles that of Caesar and Khosrau more than the attire of the Messenger (ﷺ). Indeed Muḥammad (ﷺ) did not lay one brick over another, nor erected one pole over another (i.e. build mansions), however a banner was raised and he prepared for it.'

He also used to say: 'The scholars are many but the wise are few. Indeed what is intended from knowledge is wisdom, so whoever is given wisdom then he has been given much good.'

This is how the state of the bona-fide scholars should be, if we look at Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī), Sufyān (al-Thawrī) and Imām Aḥmad, they took little from the world, enough to last them until they departed. They left nothing behind except knowledge. Even though some of them would wear nice clothes, and eat food that was far from austerity. Like Ḥasan al-Baṣrī use to eat meat every day, buying half a dirham worth of meat then cook it with gravy and share it with his family. He would also feed those that came to visit him. He would wear good clothes, but in spite of all this he was the most ascetic person who would not compete for anything ever.

When people would leave his gatherings they would not give any regard to the world, they did not see anything more contemptuous than the people of the world. When people visited him before his death, there was nothing in his house other than a bed which he was resting on, he had nothing else. So much so that Ibn 'Awn said: 'Indeed Ḥasan overpowered people in abstinence of the world, as for knowledge then he shared it with others.'

Hasan al-Baṣrī used to say: 'Indeed a scholar abstains from the world, seeking the Hereafter, striving hard in worship and establishing the Sunnah of Muḥammad (ﷺ). Whoever saw Muḥammad (ﷺ) understood that he came and went. He (ﷺ) had no interest in constructing lofty houses or palaces. Rather Allāh elevated for him knowledge, so he would earnestly seek it (to act upon).'

Sufyān al-Thawrī was more austere in his clothing than Ḥasan. So much so that if someone who did not know him, and they saw him for the first time, he would think this man is a beggar. Due to his intense fear of Allāh; when he came across lawful food he would eat from it plentifully. If he did not find anything lawful to eat, he would swallow sand. At times he would go without food for three days, even though people would present him with much wealth.

When he became satisfied from the lawful food, he would increase in his devotional actions. He would also ask in his worship, saying the following supplication for Allāh to grant it to him, 'Feed me (as you would feed a lowly slave) and make things easy for me'.

He was the most abstentious person of his time, so much so that he used to remove all talk of worldly matters in his gatherings. The rulers and kings would not seem more humble than him, nor the poor and needy, more honourable than him in his sittings.

Fear had overtaken him, when he was on his deathbed, water was brought for him, however the doctor said: 'There is no cure for this one, sadness and fear have crumbled his liver.'

It was said: 'No one from his contemporaries had more fear of Allāh than him, or more awe of Allāh in his heart than him.'

When he died one of the scholars said: 'O people of desires eat from the world with your religion, for Sufyān has died, i.e. there is no one left after him that they would be shy from.'

As for Imām Aḥmad then he was even more ascetic than him. He had more patience over a rough life, due to the meagreness of what he had. The source of his livelihood was some shops that he had inherited from his father. He would take the rent from them every month, which was less than twenty dirhams. When he died he did not leave anything except pieces of rags that weighed less than half a dirham in value. He also left a debt to be paid from the rent of his shops, even though he was offered many gifts from rulers.

Yahyā Ibn Abī Kathīr was from the bona-fide scholars who had extensive knowledge. It used to be said: there remains no one on the face of the earth like him, he use to have nice clothes, a good form, and when he died he left behind thirty dirhams which they used to provide a shroud for him, may Allāh have mercy upon him.

Muḥammad Ibn Aslam was from the grounded ascetic scholars, when he died he left nothing other than his garment and rugs. They put them on his dead body and gave the rest in charity.

The women were on the roof tops saying over him: This scholar is the one who left the world, this is what is on his body. He has left this as his inheritance. Unlike our scholars that are slaves to their stomachs, one of them sits for two or three years seeking knowledge, then he buys some land and benefits from it's wealth.

'Al-Abbās Ibn Murthid: I heard my companions saying: "Awza'ī received seventy thousand *dinars* from the ruler of Banu Umayyah. When he died, he left behind seven *dinar* that remained. He had no land or house.'

Al-'Abbās (*radīy Allāhu 'anhu*) said: 'When we looked into it, we found he had spent it all in the way of Allāh and upon the poor.'

Allāh has described the scholars in His Book with many descriptions. From them is: piety; humility and weeping as has preceded. Also belittling the world and abstaining from it as Allāh, the Exalted says about the story of Qarūn:

فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ
فِي زِينَتِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا إِنَّا لِلْأَيْمَانِ كَمَا
فُتِنَ مَا أَوْفَى قَرُونُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَقَالَ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيَلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَن ءَامَنَ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَلَا يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا بِالْصَّبْرِ ﴿٨٠﴾

“So he came out before his people in all his adornment. Those who only desired the life of this world said, ‘Oh! If only we had what Qarūn has been given! Indeed, what immense great fortune he possesses.’ But those who had been given true knowledge said: ‘Woe to you! The reward of Allāh is far better for the those who attain faith and act rightly. And none are granted this [blessing] except the patient.’”

[*al-Qaṣaṣ* (28): 79-80]

It was said to Imām Aḥmad: ‘Indeed Ibn al-Mubārak was asked: ‘How can we recognise an honest scholar?’ So he replied: ‘The one who abstains from the worldly things and occupy themselves with the Hereafter.’

Imām Aḥmad replied: ‘Yes, this is how it should be.’ Aḥmad used to rebuke the people of knowledge from loving the worldly

life and chasing after it.

Know that the thing which destroyed the people of knowledge, turned the opinion of the ignorant masses against them, and made others put the ignorant worshippers over them, was their greed of the world that entered their hearts.

‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) saw a man telling stories, so he said to him: ‘I will ask you a question that if you get wrong you will have to stop, but if you get it right I will hold you in high esteem.’ So the man said ‘Ask O Leader of the Believers!’ He asked him: ‘What makes you adhere to your religion and what makes it disappear?’ He replied: ‘Fear makes you adherence to the religion, and greed makes it disappear.’ After hearing his response ‘Alī (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) said to him: ‘Carry on telling stories, because people like you (deserve to) tell stories.’¹²⁸

This question from ‘Alī (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) to the story teller, is an indication that whoever spreads knowledge among people, talks to them, must have piety (not wanting or chasing) what the people have. Nor display greed for their wealth, or try to, pull their hearts towards himself. Rather he should spread knowledge for the sake of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, and abstaining from people with piety.

In the *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah from Ibn Mas‘ūd (*radīy Allāhu ‘anhu*) who said: ‘If the people of knowledge stored knowledge and placed it with its people, they would lead the people of their generations. However they were only generous with it, to the people of the world, so it became lowly to them.’ I heard your Prophet

¹²⁸ Abū Nu‘aym, *al-Hilyatu’l-Awliyā’*, 4/136

(ع) saying: "Whoever makes his worries into one—worrying about the Hereafter. Allāh will suffice him of any worries of the world. He whose worries are branched out into matters of the world, then Allāh will not care in which valley he perishes."¹²⁹

Abū Hāzim al-Zahid said: 'A moment in time has come to us where a scholar does not seek out a ruler. A man when he attains knowledge it is sufficient for him, if he does not seek anything else. Hence the rulers eat with them in their homes and take from them (knowledge). This is good for both, the leader and those who are led. However when the leaders see that the scholars have been distracted and tricked (by chasing after pomp and glamour in order to attain material wealth). Then they sit and ask them about those things that are in their hands (of worldly gain). When that becomes insignificant to them, they stop taking from them (knowledge) and quoting them. That is a cause for destruction for both sides.'

A Bedouin entered Baṣrah and asked who is the leader of this town? They replied: 'Ḥasan.' He said: 'By what virtue does he lead you?' They said: 'The people are in need of his knowledge, and he is not in need of their worldly possessions.'

Ḥasan used to say: 'Indeed everything can be tarnished, and knowledge is tarnished by greed.'

He also said: 'Whoever attains knowledge, but then his enthusiasm for worldly gains increase (chasing after wealth, power and status). As result he only increases in his distance from Allāh, and Allāh increases His hatred of him.'

One day Ḥasan came across a group of reciters (of the Qur'ān)

¹²⁹ Ibn Mājah ,#257, #4106.

at the doors of the leaders, so he said: 'You have made soar your foreheads and worn out your shoes. You have come carrying knowledge on your necks to their doors and they are in little need of you. Had you remained in your homes until you were called for, you would have been greater in their eyes. Disperse all of you - may Allāh separate you all.'

In another narration: 'Disperse! May Allāh separate your souls from your bodies. You have worn out your shoes; folded your clothes; cut your hair and you crave for what the rulers possess. The leaders have little regard for you. Indeed you have disgraced and lowered the reciters in their eyes, so may Allāh disgrace you. By Allāh, if only you showed little interest in what they have, then they would desire what you possessed (of knowledge). However your desire and obsession was evident, in return they showed no interest for what you have (to offer), or in you. May Allāh banish whoever distances himself.'

In short, whoever does not guard himself, will not benefit from his knowledge nor benefit others.

Imām Shāfi'ī said: 'Whoever reads the Qur'ān magnifies his worth, whoever writes ḥadīth strengthens his argument, whoever seeks fiqh (understanding) makes noble his standing, whoever learns Arabic will soften his character, whoever learns counting increases his views, and whoever does not guard himself will not benefit from his knowledge.'

CONCLUSION

[A Poem on Knowledge]

Along these lines Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Abdu'l-'Azīz Al-Jarjanī, may Allāh have mercy upon him, said:

“They say you have in you gloominess,
rather they saw a man in a shameful state holding back.

I see people dismiss the one who lowers himself (in humility),
and the one honoured by self pride, held in high esteem.

I would not be fulfilling the right of knowledge,
if every time greed appears I turn it into a stepping stone.

When it is said this is a spring I said: ‘I see’,
but the free spirit can suffer thirst.

My heart won't be worn out in serving knowledge,
so I serve whoever I meet, but for that too am I served.

Am I to be wretched in sowing (seeds) and then reap shame!
if so pursuing ignorance that has been contained [is better].

If the people of knowledge defend it,
knowledge will defend them.

If they hold it with high esteem in their souls,
so too will they be held.

But they saw knowledge as a lowly endeavour,
so they too became lowly and made filthy.

His face became envious with greed,
yearning for material gain of this world, until he becomes
gloomy.”

Eagerness for worldly things and having greed is detestable,
for scholars it is even more so. If it occurs after old age then its
disgracefulness knows no bounds.

One of the scholars from the *tabi'in* wore his clothes to prepare
to visit the king. He got a mirror and looked at himself, in it he
saw his beard and how old he looked, so he said: “The king and
the old man! He then removed his clothes and sat down (and said
the following);

“The time has arrived after the darkness of ignorance,
for me to see (and realise).

For the old man the morning is calling with my scrolls,
the night of youth is fleeting away, so go slowly.

The morning is the end time, for the one walking at night,
how many are deluded by the world and its beauty.

Should I build my world on the cliff edge,
to see it fall down.

A world where the sins linger on,
but its pleasures vanish so fast.

Is it not true that the world is made more hideous by these two
[sins and pleasures].

The joyful one is not the one who his earthly life pleases him.
But, Indeed the joyful one is he who is saved from the
scorching fire of Hell.

I have awoken from fear and dread of my sins,
for Allāh knows what I announce in the open
and what I hold secret.

When my sins overwhelm me, trying to make me lose hope.
I hold fast to the pardon of the Great One,
for He alone can pardon.
He is the All-Forgiving.”

With this I conclude.

*All praises are for Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.
May peace and blessings be upon our leader Muḥammad,
his Family and Companions forever more.*

APPENDIX ONE

[All Goodness lies in Traversing the Way of the *Salaf*]

Regardless of whether it be in the foundation of the religion or its subsidiary issues, the exegesis of the Qur'ān, the explanation of ḥadīth, asceticism, matters which soften the heart, points of benefit and wisdom, exhortations—whatever the *Salaf* spoke about—whoever traverses their path in this is rightly guided, and whoever does not; instead involving himself in excessive questioning, disputation, and speculation; is not rightly guided. However, if this latter person was to admit their excellence and his own shortcoming then his state is better. Iyās Ibn Mu'āwiyah said, 'Only a fool is unaware of the defects of his own soul.' It was asked of him, 'What is your defect?' He replied, 'Speaking too much.'¹ However, if this latter person was to attribute excellence to himself and deficiency and ignorance to those who preceded him, then he has clearly deviated and has suffered a great loss.

In summary, in these corrupt times, it is upon the person to either be content that he is a scholar in the sight of Allāh, or not be

¹ Abū Nu'aym, vol. 3, p. 146 #3489.

content with this and instead content himself with being a scholar in the eyes of people. If he chooses the first, let him suffice with Allāh's knowledge of him; whoever has a state of gnosis existing between him and Allāh will suffice with Allāh's knowledge of him. Whoever chooses the second then he falls under the saying of the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, "Whoever seeks knowledge to compete with the scholars, or to argue with the fools, or to win the attention of people, let him take his place in the Fire."²

Wuhayb ibn al-Ward said, 'It could well be that a scholar in the eyes of the people is counted to be amongst the ignorant in the Sight of Allāh.'

Muslim records the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, said, "The first to be burnt in the Fire are three..." amongst whom are the scholar and the reciter of the Qur'ān who only learnt their knowledge that it may be said of them, 'He is a scholar', 'He is a reciter of the Qur'ān.' It was indeed said of them and they will be dragged face first into Hellfire.³

² The author, may Allāh have mercy upon him, has actually combined two separate aḥādīth in one. The first is the ḥadīth, "Whoever acquires knowledge to compete with the scholars, or to argue with the fools, or to win the attention of people, is in the Fire." Recorded by Tirmidhī #2654 and Ibn Mājah #253 on the authority of ibn 'Umar.

It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb* #109.

The second is the ḥadīth, "Whoever seeks knowledge for other than Allāh—or, intending thereby other than Allāh—let him take his place in the Fire." Recorded by Tirmidhī #2655 and Ibn Mājah #258 on the authority of ibn 'Umar.

It was declared ḍa'īf by Albānī, *Da'īf al-Jāmi'* #5687.

³ Muslim #1905/4923 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah with the words, "The

If one does not content his soul with this, contenting it instead with the position of judge simply because this is a position that people respect, then he has chosen that which is lesser in exchange for that which is best, and he has moved from the ranking of scholar to the ranking of oppressor. This is why, when one of the Salaf was offered the position of judge, he refused saying, 'I only learnt knowledge that I may be resurrected with the Prophets, not that I may be resurrected with kings. The scholars are resurrected with the Prophets and judges are resurrected with kings!'⁴

=

first man (whose case) will be decided on the Day of Judgment, will be a man who died as a martyr. He shall be brought forth and Allāh will recount His blessings (which He had bestowed upon him) and he will acknowledge them. Then Allāh will ask, "What did you do with them?" He will reply, "I fought for Your sake until I died as a martyr." Allāh will say, "You lie. You fought so that you might be called a 'brave warrior' and you were called so." Then a command will be given and he will be dragged on his face and cast into Hell.

And a man who acquired knowledge and taught it and recited the Qur'an. He will be brought forth and Allāh will recount His blessings (which He had bestowed upon him) and he will acknowledge them. Then Allāh will ask, "What did you do with them?" He will say, "I acquired knowledge and disseminated it and recited the Qur'an for your sake." Allāh will say, "You lie. You acquired knowledge so that you might be called 'a scholar,' and you recited the Qur'an so that it might be said, 'He is a Qāri,' and it was said. Then a command will be given and he will be dragged on his face and cast into Hell.

And a man whom Allāh had made abundantly rich and had granted every kind of wealth. He will be brought forth and Allāh will recount His blessings (which He had bestowed upon him) and he will acknowledge them. Then Allāh will ask, "What did you do with them?" He will say, "I spent money in every cause in which You wished that it should be spent for Your sake." Allāh will say, "You lie. You did so that it might be said, 'He is generous,' and it was said. Then a command will be given and he will be dragged on his face and cast into Hell.'

⁴ Taken from the English translation of, '*The Excellence of Knowledge*' pp67-68 published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2008 under the Ibn Rajab Series.

APPENDIX TWO

[The 'Inner Sciences']

From those sciences that have been innovated is the discussion and analysis of the 'Inner Sciences' i.e. sciences dealing with matters such as gnosis, the actions of the heart, and related issues based upon pure opinion, spiritual experience (*dhawq*), or spiritual realisation (*kashf*). This contains a great danger and was rejected by the greatest of the Imāms such as Aḥmad and others.

Sulaymān [al-Dārānī] used to say, 'Sometimes a point of inspiration occurs to me as it does to the nation [of ascetics], but I do not accept it except by the testimony of two just witnesses: the Book and the Sunnah.'¹

Junayd said, 'This knowledge of ours is governed by the Book and the Sunnah, whoever has not read the Qur'ān or written the ḥadīth is not to be followed in this knowledge of ours.'² This knowledge has been greatly abused and some of those who laid claim to it fell into various forms of heresy and hypocrisy: claim-

¹ Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyyah*, p. 78.

² Abū Nu'aym, vol. 10, p. 274 #15216, who mentions the additional words, '... or attained fiqh of the religion is not to be followed...'

ing that the *Awliyā'* were better than the Prophets,³ or that they had no need of the Prophets, belittling the laws conveyed by the Messengers, having the belief of incarnation and unification (*ḥulūl wa'l-ittihād*), the belief of the unity of being (*waḥdatu'l-wujūd*), and other such matters which form the foundations of disbelief, sin, and transgression; such as the claim that many of the prohibited matters are lawful to them. Through this approach they have introduced many affairs into this religion that have nothing to do with it. They thought some of these affairs would engender softness of the heart such as singing and dancing.⁴ They thought other matters would serve to refine the soul such as passionately desiring forbidden pictures and looking at them. Yet others they thought would break the soul or lead to humility such as the desire for clothes and other such matters whose legitimacy has not been proven by the Divine Law (*Shari'ah*). Indeed some of these matters actually distract away from the remembrance of Allāh and prayer such as singing and looking at that which is prohibited to see; in this they resemble those who took their religion as mere play and amusement.⁵

³ The opinion of the likes of ibn al-'Arabī and al-Hallāj.

⁴ The author, may Allāh have mercy upon him, discusses this issue at length in his treatise, *Mas'alab al-Samā'*.

⁵ Taken from the English translation of, '*The Excellence of Knowledge*' pp52-53 published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2008 under the Ibn Rajab Series.

APPENDIX THREE

[Beneficial Knowledge with regards the ‘Inner Sciences’]

Beneficial knowledge in this arena is to strictly follow the texts of the Book and Sunnah, to understand their meanings, and in order to do so, confine oneself to what has been reported from the Companions, the Successors, and their successors in matters to do with the Qur’ān, ḥadīth, the lawful and prohibited, asceticism, softening of the heart, gnosis, and other such things. It is upon one to exert himself in distinguishing the authentic narration from the weak, then after this to exert himself in correctly understanding the authentic narrations. In this there is sufficiency for any who possess intelligence and adequate material for those who seek beneficial knowledge.

Whoever suffices with this, makes his intention sincere—seeking the Face of Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent—and seeks His aid, He will aid him, guide him, grant him the divine accord, make him firm, grant him understanding, and bestow upon him inspiration. At this juncture this knowledge will sprout its special fruit: the fear of Allāh, just as He, Mighty and Magnificent, says,

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

It is only the learned amongst His servants who truly fear Allāh.

[*Fāṭir* (35): 28]

Ibn Mas‘ūd and others said, ‘Sufficient knowledge is it that one fears Allāh, and sufficient ignorance is it to be deceived of Allāh.’¹ Some of the Salaf said, ‘Knowledge is not narrating a great deal but knowledge is the fear of Allāh.’² Others said, ‘Whoever fears Allāh is the scholar and whoever disobeys him is the ignoramus.’³ There are many quotes from them carrying this meaning.

The reason for this is that beneficial knowledge effectuates two matters:

1. Knowledge of Allāh and what befits Him of Beautiful Names, Lofty Attributes, and Awe-Inspiring Actions. This necessarily leads to venerating Him, glorifying Him, having fear of Him, being in awe of Him, loving Him, having hope in Him, putting

¹ Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Barr #1514; Aḥmad, *al-Zuhd*, p. 158; ibn Abī Shaybah and it is ṣaḥīḥ.

Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Barr #962 and Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 4, p. 470, also quotes the saying of Masrūq, ‘Sufficient knowledge is it that one fear Allāh, and sufficient ignorance is it for one to be deceived by his own actions.’ It is also ṣaḥīḥ.

² Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Barr #1400-1401; Tabarānī, *al-Kabīr* #8534 as the words of ibn Mas‘ūd.

Haythamī, vol. 10, p. 235, declared the isnād to be munqaṭi‘.

³ Ibn ‘Abdu’l-Barr #1544 quotes the first half as a statement of ‘Aṭā’ with a ḍa‘īf isnād. However the meaning is established and quoted from a group of the Salaf as referenced in Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 5, p. 470.

ones reliance in Him, being content with His decree, and bearing His trials with patience.

2. Knowledge of what He loves and is pleased with and that which He detests and angers Him of beliefs, actions—the outer and inner, and statements. This leads one to rush towards performing that which Allāh loves and is pleased with and avoiding all that He detests and angers Him.

When knowledge sprouts these fruits, it is beneficial knowledge. When knowledge is beneficial and takes root in the heart, the heart fears Allāh, submits to Him, and humbles itself in awe, glorification, fear, love, and veneration. When this happens the soul is content with the humblest of lawful worldly provisions and this in turn leads it to turn away from the world and all temporal effects. As such there remains no property, status, or surplus effects that is looked at wantonly by the servant which would be a cause for the decrease of his portion with Allāh of the bliss of the Hereafter. This was stated by Ibn ‘Umar and others from amongst the Salaf and has been reported from the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him.

When all of this happens, a special relationship between Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent, and the servant is engendered. If he asks, He grants, and if he supplicates, He answers as is mentioned in the ḥadīth qudsī, “...my servant continues to draw closer to Me by performing the optional deeds until I love him. When I love him, I am his hearing by which he hears, his sight by which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks. Were he to ask of Me, I would grant him, and were he to take refuge with Me, I would grant him refuge,”⁴ and in another narration,

⁴ Bukhārī #6502 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

“Were he to supplicate to Me, I would respond.”⁵

In his, peace and blessing be upon him, advice that was directed to ibn ‘Abbās there occurs, “Be mindful of Allāh, He will be mindful of you. Be mindful of Allāh and you will find Him in front of you. Know Allāh in times of ease and He will know you in times of hardship.”⁶

The goal of the servant is that there be, in his heart, a specific gnosis between him and His Lord whereby he finds Him close all the time and takes comfort with Him in times of solitude. He finds pleasure in remembering Him, supplicating to Him, privately discoursing with Him, and serving Him. None would experience this except he who obeys Him in open and in secret. It was asked of Wuhayb ibn al-Ward, ‘Can one who disobeys [Allāh] experience the sweetness of obedience?’ He replied, ‘No, and neither can one who merely wishes to disobey him.’⁷

When this is actualised in the servant, he can then be said to have gnosis of his Lord and a special relationship develops between the two such that when he asks, He grants; when he supplicates, He answers. Sha‘wānah said to Fuḍayl when he asked her to supplicate for him, ‘Does there not exist between you and your Lord a relationship such that if you supplicate to Him, he answers you?’

⁵ Aḥmad #26193 on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah.

Refer to Haythamī, vol. 10, p. 269; and ibn Rajab, *Jāmi‘ al-‘Ulūm*, vol. 2, pp. 330+.

⁶ The wording is that of Aḥmad #2669-2763-2803 and it is also recorded by Tirmidhī #2516 who ruled it to be ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ.

Albānī ruled it to be ṣaḥīḥ in *Zilāl al-Jannah* #315.

⁷ Abū Nu‘aym, vol. 8, p. 154 #11689.

upon which he fell unconscious.⁸

The servant continually faces hardship and difficulty in this world, in the *barzakh*⁹ and at the place of the final standing. When there exists this special gnosis between the servant and His Lord, Allāh will suffice him during all of this. This is what is indicated in his, peace and blessing be upon him, advice to ibn ‘Abbās, “Know Allāh in times of ease and He will know you in times of hardship.”

It was asked of Ma‘rūf, ‘What is it that has roused in you the desire for seclusion?’ The questioner mentioned death, the grave, the place of the final standing, Paradise and Hell as possible causes to which he replied, ‘All of this is in His hand, when there exists a gnosis between you and Him, He suffices you during all of this.’

So beneficial knowledge is that which engenders a gnosis between the servant and his Lord and leads to it such that he comes to know his Lord, singles him out alone in belief and worship, takes comfort in Him, develops a sense of shyness (*hayāʾ*) of Him, and worships Him as if he sees Him.

This is why a group of the Companions said, ‘The first knowledge to be raised from the people would be by humility (*khushūʿ*).’¹⁰ Ibn Mas‘ūd said, ‘There are people who recite the Qur’ān yet it

⁸ Abū Nu‘aym, vol. 8, p. 116 #11567, the narrative continues to quote Fuḍayl as saying, ‘Ennoble us with the nobility of obedience and do not humiliate us with the humiliation of disobedience.’

⁹ *al-Barzakh*, refers to a barrier placed between a person who has deceased and this worldly life. It is a way of referring to the first stages of the life of the Hereafter. A very good treatment of *al-Barzakh* and the issues related to it can be found in Muhammad al-Jibālī, ‘Life in *al-Barzakh*’ [*Al-Kitaab & As-Sunnah* publishing, 1998].

does not descend beyond their throats; were it to reach the heart and take root therein, it is then that it would benefit.¹¹

al-Ḥasan said, 'Knowledge is of two types: knowledge that is superficial utterance upon the tongue, that is Allāh's proof against the children of Ādam; and knowledge that takes root in the heart and that is beneficial knowledge.'¹² The Salaf used to say, 'The scholars are of three categories: the scholar who knows Allāh and His commands; the scholar who knows Allāh but not His commands; and the scholar who knows His commands but does not know Allāh. The best and most complete of them is the first—he is the one who truly fears Allāh and knows His rulings.'¹³

The fundamental matter here is that the servant uses knowledge to engender a gnosis of his Lord. When this comes to fruition he will find Him close. When this happens, He will bring him close and answer his supplications. It is mentioned in a Judeo-Christian narration, 'Son of Adam! Seek me and you will find Me, when you find Me you will find everything. However if you don't find Me, you will have lost everything. I am more beloved to you than

¹⁰ Aḥmad #23990 from Shaddād Ibn Aws and it was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #4572 and Ḥākim #337 with Dhahabī agreeing; Tirmidhī #2653 on the authority of 'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit and he said it was ḥasan gharīb and it was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by Ḥākim #338 with Dhahabī agreeing; and Ḥākim #8448 on the authority of Hudhayfah and he said it was ṣaḥīḥ.

¹¹ Muslim #822

¹² Dārimī #376 and ibn Abī Shaybah, vol. 13, p. 235 and it is ṣaḥīḥ.

¹³ Dārimī #375 and Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr #1543 on the authority of Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah and the isnād is ṣaḥīḥ.

anything else.’

Dhū’l-Nūn used to repeat these verses by night,

Seek for yourselves
The likes of what I have found.
I have found a place of rest wherein
He never falters in His love:
If I move away, He draws me close
And if I move closer, He draws nigh.^{14, 15}

¹⁴ Abū Nu‘aym, vol. 9, p. 357 #14112.

¹⁵ Taken from the English translation of, *‘The Excellence of Knowledge’* p53 published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2008 under the Ibn Rajab Series.

APPENDIX FOUR

[The Foundation of Knowledge]

Imām Aḥmad, may Allāh have mercy upon him, used to say about Ma'rūf, 'He possesses the foundation of knowledge: the fear of Allāh.' Therefore the foundation of knowledge is that knowledge which leads to fearing Him, loving Him, drawing close to Him, taking comfort with Him, and ardently desiring Him. Then this is followed by knowledge of the rulings of Allāh, all that He loves and is pleased with from the servant of statement, action, spiritual condition, and belief. Whoever realises these two types of knowledge has found beneficial knowledge; he has attained beneficial knowledge, a fearful heart, a content soul, and a supplication that is responded to.

Whoever does not attain this knowledge will fall into the four matters that the Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, sought refuge from and his knowledge will actually become a source of misery for him and a proof against him. He will not benefit by it because it did not make his heart fearful of his Lord, it did not satisfy the desires of the soul for this world, rather it only strengthened it, his supplication went unheard because he did not obey the commands of his Lord and avoid all that He detests and

angers Him. This provided that his knowledge is that knowledge from which benefit can be hoped, i.e. that knowledge derived from the Book and Sunnah. Whatever knowledge may be derived from other than these two sources is not beneficial and there is no hope of deriving benefit through it, indeed its harm is greater than its benefit!¹

¹ Taken from the English translation of, *'The Excellence of Knowledge'* p59 published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2008 under the Ibn Rajab Series.

APPENDIX FIVE

[Beware of Pitfalls and Obstacles]

Practice isolation for it is the basis of all good,¹ and beware of bad companionship, and let the books and reading about the lives of our predecessors be your companions.

Do not delve into a science before mastering what comes before

¹ Al-Imām al-Bukhārī has a chapter in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* called: "Isolation is a rest from mixing with bad people." You should know that the differing of scholars here concerns the superiority of marriage and being single and that it depends on the person and his condition. One of the most important things one should pay attention to here is that an ignorant person isolating himself only harms him. A scholar was once asked: "What do you say about the isolation of an ignorant person?" and he replied: "Insane calamity." He was then asked: "What about that of a learned one?" He said: "Why do you wish for it? Leave it, for it has its feet and water reservoir. It will drink water and eat the trees till its Lord meets it." Al-Imam al-Khattabī has authored a great book on isolation and abridged the truth about this issue in the end (p. 117-118), saying: "The ideal here is that a person does not neglect any duties he may have towards others even if they don't ask him to perform them, and that he does not get involved in falsehood that is not binding on him even if they invite him. Indeed, whoever gets occupied with what does not concern him will miss out on what does concern him, and whoever gets busy with falsehood will become apathetic with truth. So be with the people in good and stay away from their evil, and aim to be a witness who is like he wasn't there and a learned man who is like an ignoramus."

it. Read how the most complete of us used to seek knowledge and act accordingly, and do not be pleased with less than that. The poet has said:

In faults of men I have not seen anything
Like the shortcoming of the able in achieving completeness

Know also, that Sacred Knowledge raises the status of the lowly. Indeed, many scholars used to be unknown and unappreciated before becoming scholars. ‘Aṭā ibn Abū Rabāḥ, for example, was black and not pleasant looking. Sulaimān ibn ‘Abd al-Mālik, who was the caliph at that time, came to him with his two sons and asked him about the rites of pilgrimage. He answered whilst turning his face away from them. The caliph said to his sons: “Get up and do not be indolent or lazy in seeking knowledge, as I shall never forget this humiliation in front of this black slave.”

Al-Hasan, Ibn Sirīn, Makhūl and others were slaves as well, but were still given honor and attained high status through knowledge and fear of God.

² Taken from the English translation of, *‘Sincere Counsel to the Seekers of Sacred Knowledge’* pp67-70 published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2011 under the Ibn Jawzī Series.

APPENDIX SIX

[Sacred Knowledge Supersedes all Voluntary Actions]

Once you have reviewed your lesson till forenoon, pray eight units of Ṣalāt al-Duḥa [the forenoon prayer]. Then keep yourself busy with reading or copying texts till 'Asr time. After 'Asr, return to your studies until Maghrib time.¹ After [praying] Maghrib, pray two units, reading two Juz' of Qur'ān in them, and study again after praying the Ṣalāh of 'Isha'.² Then lay down on your right

¹ It should be noted, may Allāh have mercy on us all, that the specified times and methods of voluntary worship (*aurad*) vary from person to person whether they are related to invocation, remembrance, reading the Qur'ān, beneficial knowledge or seeking forgiveness at night or day. Ibn Qudama says (*Mukhtasar Minhāj al-Qāsidin*, p. 82): "The traveler on the path to Afterlife is one of six: 1. a worshiper, 2. a scholar, 3. a student, 4. a man of responsibility, 5. a laborer, or 6. someone who has immersed himself in his love for Allāh and spends all his time in that." After this the author began clarifying and arranging the preferred actions for each depending on their varying conditions. The things he mentioned are very important so do refer to it. As for Ibn al-Jawzī's advice here, it should be known that it is directed towards a student of Sacred Knowledge who is able to dedicate all of his time for his studies with nothing to hold him back. And Allāh knows best.

² Al-Hāfiẓ ibn al-Jawzī said (*al-Haẓẓu 'ala Hifẓ al'Ilm wa Dhikru Kibār al-Huffāẓ*)

side,³ say *subhanAllāh* thirty three times, *alḥamdulillāh* thirty three times and *Allāhu akbar* thirty four times.⁴ Say: “O Allah! Protect me from Your punishment on the day You shall gather Your slaves.”⁵

When you open your eyes after sleep, know that your soul has

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p. 35): “How to master what you memorise (the text says *Abkam*, but it seems to mean *Ihkam* instead): The secret behind mastering what you memorise is lots of repetition, and people are different in that: With some the information sticks with just a little amount of repetition and others need to repeat it many times. Therefore, a man should repeat his lessons in order to have it firmly established in his memory. The Prophet (ﷺ) has said: “Take good care of the Qur’ān for it escapes the chests of men quicker than a precious camel from its leash.” I say: This ḥadīth is agreed upon: al-Bukhārī, 5033, Muslim, 791, 231, from Abū Hurairah.

³ Refer to: *Zād al-Ma’ād*, 4/239: “His preparations for sleep and wakefulness.” Also, it was related (al-Bukhārī, 6315, Muslim, 2710, 56) from the ḥadīth of al-Barā’ Ibn ‘Āzib that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When you come to your resting place, perform the wudu you’d perform for praying. Then lay down on your right side and say: ‘O Allāh, I have submitted myself to You, turned my face to You, entrusted my affair to You and put my trust in You having my back. I have done this out of my desire to arrive to You and out of my fear of You. No shelter is there from You and no savior except You. I have believed in Your Book which You have revealed and Your prophet whom you have sent.’ Make these your final words. If you die on that night you will die on your *fitrah* (natural disposition)”.

⁴ Based on the ḥadīth (al-Bukhārī, 6318, Muslim, 2727) from ‘Alī where Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said to Fāṭima: “When you go to sleep, say *Allāhu akbar* 33 times, *subhanAllāh* 33 times and *alḥamdulillāh* 33 times.” Another narration says: “*subhanAllāh* is 34 times” and another one says: “*Allāhu akbar* is 34 times.” ‘Alī said: “I have not left it ever since I heard it from Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ).” He was asked: “Not even on the night of *Siffin* (a war)?” to which he replied: “Not even on the night of *Siffin*.”

⁵ Ṣaḥīḥ: Abū Dāwūd, 5045, Ibn al-Sinnī, 7337, al-Nasā’i: *‘Amal al-Yaumi wa al-Layla*, 452, al-Tabarānī: *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, 394, from Hafsa, the mother of the believers, where he told that whenever Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) wanted to=

now taken its share.⁶ Get up, perform ablution and pray what you can in the darkness of the night. Open your prayer with two light units, and follow them with two units, reciting two Juz' from the Qur'ān in them. After that, start your studies, as Sacred Knowledge is better than all voluntary actions.⁷

=sleep he put his right hand under his cheek and said: "Allāh, protect me from Your punishment on the day You shall resurrect your slaves" three times. This narration was declared ḥasan by al-Ḥāfiẓ (*Natā'ij al-Afkār*, p. 193). It has supportive narrations from al-Barā', Hudhayfah and Ibn Mas'ūd which raise it to the level of ṣaḥīḥ, and Allāh knows best.

⁶ As for his guidance while being awake, he used to wake up when the rooster crowed, praising Allāh Most High, saying *Allāhu akbar* and *lā ilaha illallāh* and calling to Him. After that he would use the tooth stick (*miswak*), get up for ablution and stand in front of His Lord in prayer, conversing with Him through His speech, praising and hoping, desiring and fearing. Is there really anything better than this in preserving the health of one's body and heart, spirit and strength and the enjoyment of this world and the Hereafter? Refer to: *Zad al-Ma'ād*, 4/246.

⁷ This has been mentioned by many Imāms such as al-Zuhri, Sufyān al-Thawri, Abū Hanīfah and al-Shāfi'i. You should refer to Ibn Rajab's explanation of Abū al-Darda's ḥadīth (p. 96, 103) as he has analyzed this issue in it in academic and fair fashion. Every student should understand his words and follow them. He said: "The scholars have differed concerning this issue: Which one is better, studying Sacred Knowledge or performing voluntary prayers and reciting the Qur'ān and words of remembrance? Knowledge is better for him who studies sincerely for Allāh's sake and has a good and clear mind. However, this should still be joined with a good amount of prayers and worship. If you find him to be a serious student but notice that he's lacking in his worship, it is a lazy and worthless person you're dealing with, and this person is not truthful when he says his intentions are good. As for when one studies ḥadīth and *fiqh* simply as an intellectual pursuit, worship is better in such a case."

Taken from the English translation of, '*Sincere Counsel to the Seekers of Sacred Knowledge*' pp64-66 published by Dār as-Sunnah Publishers 2011 under the Ibn Jawzi Series

BIOGRAPHIES

Persons Cited in the Text

‘Ā’ISHAH: bint Abū Bakr *as-Siddiq*, the Mother of the Believers and most beloved wife of the Prophet (ﷺ). She reported many *aḥādīth* from the Prophet and many Companions and Successors reported from her. She died in the year 58H.

‘ABDULLĀH BIN ‘ABBĀS: ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim ibn ‘Abd Munāf al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī, the cousin of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the interpreter of the Qur’ān. He was born three years before the *Hijrah* and was called the ‘Ocean of Knowledge’ due to his vast knowledge. He took part in the *Jihād* in North Africa in the year 27H and died in the year 68H.

‘ABDULLĀH BIN MAS‘ŪD: ibn Ghāfil ibn Ḥabīb al-Hadhli Abū ‘Abdur-Raḥmān. One of the scholars amongst the Companions and he witnessed *Badr* and the following battles. He had many virtues and died in the year 32H.

‘ABDULLĀH BIN ‘UMAR: ibn al-Khaṭṭāb al-‘Adawī, Abū ‘Abdur-Raḥmān, the noble Companion and scholar. He reported many

aḥādīth from the Messenger (ﷺ) and died in the year 73H.

ABŪ BAKR AL-ṢIDDĪQ: 'Abdullāh ibn 'Uthmān ibn Āmir al-Qurashī. The first *Khalīfah* of the Messenger (ﷺ), his companion in the cave, his closest friend and one of the ten promised Paradise. He was the first man to accept Islām and died in the year 13H.

ABŪ AD-DARDĀ': Uwaymir ibn Mālik ibn Zayd ibn Qays al-Khazrajī al-Anṣārī. There is a difference of opinion concerning his name. He accepted Islām on the day of *Badr* and witnessed *Uḥud*. He was from the Legal Jurists and ascetics of the Companions. He died in the year 32H.

ABŪ DĀWŪD: Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath ibn Ishāq ibn Bashīr, Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, the *Imām*, *Hāfiẓ* and author of the famous *Sunan*. He died in the year 275H.

ABŪ HURAYRAH: 'Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr ad-Dusī. His name is greatly differed over. He accepted Islām in the year 7H and reported the most ḥadīth from the Prophet (ﷺ). He died in the year 59H.

'ALĪ BIN ABĪ ṬĀLIB: ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī, the fourth Rightly Guided *Khalīfah* and one of ten promised Paradise. He accepted Islām at the age of thirteen and was famous for his chivalry, bravery and knowledge. He married Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) and was martyred in the year 40H.

AL-BARĀ'A BIN MĀLIK: ibn an-Naḍr al-Anṣārī. He witnessed *Uḥud* and gave the pledge of allegiance under the tree. He was martyred in the year 20H on the Day of *Tustor*.

ABŪ HĀKIM IBRĀHĪM IBN DINĀR: The great exemplary scholar Abū Hākim Ibrāhīm ibn Dinār al-Nahruwānī al-Ḥanbalī, one of the Imāms of Baghdād, a godly ascetic, who was benevolent and forbearing. He was one of the greatest scholars in the field of inheritance. He established a school by *Bāb al-Aṣṣaj inqata'a bihā yata'abbadu*. He preferred to be unknown, and was always content with his condition. He used to earn his bread as a tailor, taking only two coins for a garment. Some individuals attempted to anger him but to no avail, and he would serve the disabled and old timers with a joyful face. His hearing of ḥadīth was correct. He passed away in 556 AH. (al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī: *Sīyar al-A'lam al-Nubulā'*, 20/396. For his biography, refer to: Ibn al-Jawzī: *al-Muntazam*, 10/201, 202, *Thaīl Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/231-241, *Shatharāt al-Thahab*, 4/176, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, 12/245)

AḤMAD IBN ḤANBAL: Ibn Hilāl ash-Shaybānī, Abū 'Abdullāh, the Imām of the *Sunnah* and author of the famous *Musnad*. He was known for his knowledge of ḥadīth, *fiqh*, and his *taqwā* and asceticism. He was put to test in the days of Caliph al-Ma'mūn concerning the calamity of Qur'ān's creation. He stood firm and did not answer the way he was told to, and by this earned a high position in this world and the Hereafter. Ibn al-Jawzī has dedicated a volume to his life and virtues, so refer to it. He died in the year 241H.

'ĀMIR IBN 'ABD QAIS: Imām Abū 'Abd Allāh (and it is said: Abū 'Amr) al-Tamīmī al-'Anbarī 'Amir ibn 'Abd Qais al-Baṣrī. Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī described him as: The example, the *walī* and the ascetic. He is one of the eight leading *Tabi'īn* in ascetism. Ka'b al-Ahbār once saw him and said: 'This is the devotee of this nation.' Qātada said: 'When 'Amir was on the verge of

death he cried.' He was asked: 'Why are you crying?' so he said: 'I am not crying because I fear death or crave this world. It is the thirst of the midday heat and the standing at night that I cry for.' He is said to have died in the time of Mu'awiya. (Refer to his biography: Ibn Sa'd: *al-Tabaqāt*, 7/103, Aḥmad: *al-Zuhd*, 218, *Ḥilyatu'l-Auliya'*, 2/87, *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 4/15, 'Alqama ibn Murthid: *Zuhd al-Thamaniya min al-Tabi'in*, p. 37-40.)

BUKHĀRĪ: Muḥammad bin Ismā'il bin Ibrāhīm bin al-Mughīrah, Abū 'Abdullāh. He was born in the year 194H and became one of the *Imāms* of ḥadīth and was nicknamed 'The Leader of the Believers in Ḥadīth.' He died in the year 256H.

AL-ḤASAN IBN ABŪ'L-ḤASAN AL-BAṢRĪ ABŪ SA'ĪD: The freed slave of Zayd ibn Thābit, the example of ascetic scholars and one of the great characters of the Tabi'in. He died in 110. Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī said: 'Had you seen him you would have said that you have never sat with a scholar of jurisprudence.' Abu Ja'far al-Bāqir said: 'That is the person whose speech resembles that of the Prophets.' Refer to his biography: Ibn Sa'd: *al-Tabaqāt*, 7/156, *Ḥilyatu'l-Auliya'*, 2/131, Aḥmad: *al-Zuhd*, 2/225, *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 4/563, *Tathkirat al-Huffāz*, 1/66. Ibn al-Jawzī has dedicated a book for the life and virtues of this Imam which is printed and available.

IBRĀHĪM IBN ADHAM: The exemplary Imām, the knower and the master of ascetics, Abū Ishāq al-'Ajli al-Khurāsānī al-Bakhlī, the resident of Syria (approximately 100-662). Abu Nu'aym said: 'I heard Sufyān say: 'Ibrāhīm ibn Adham resembled Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl. Had he been a Sahābi he would have surely been a virtuous man.'" His biography can be found in *Ḥilyatu'l-*

Auliya' (7/367-8/58), *Tabaqāt al-Auliya'* (5/15), *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'* (7/387), Ibn Athir's *al-Kamil* (6/56), *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah* (10/135-145) and *Shathbarāt al-Thabab* (1/255-256).

IBN HIBBĀN: Abū Hātim Muḥammad ibn Hibbān al-Tamīmī al-Bustī, the *Hāfiẓ*, *Mujtabid* and author of the famous *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Hibbān*. He died in the year 354H.

MAKHŪL: the scholar of Syria. His name is Makhūl ibn Abī Muslim Shahrab ibn Shathil ibn Sind ibn Shirwan ibn Yazdak ibn Yaghuth ibn Kisra. He was taken prisoner in Kabul but his master's identity is disputed over, but the most correct of opinions is that he was the slave of a Huthali woman. He was from the middle of the Tabi'in and died in 112, 113, or 114. Abū Hātim said: 'Nobody in Syria is as knowledgeable in jurisprudence as Makhūl.' For his biography, refer to: Ibn Sa'd: *al-Tabaqāt*, 7/453, *Hilyatu'l-Auliya'*, 5/177, *Taḥṭhib al-Asmā'i wa al-Lughāt*, 2/113, 114, *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 5/155, *Taḥkīrat al-Huffāẓ*, 1/107, *al-Tbar*, 1/140, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, 9/305, *Husn al-Muhadara*, 1/119.

MA'RŪF AL-KARKHĪ: Abū Maḥfūz al-Baghdādī described by al-Hāfiẓ al-Dhahabī as: 'The authority of the ascetics, the blessing of our times.' Al-Hāfiẓ Ibn al-Jawzī has gathered his virtues in a book that has been printed. He passed away in 200 AH. Imām Aḥmad said that he is a person whose *du'a* is answered. 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: 'I said to my father: 'Did Ma'rūf have any knowledge?' to which he replied: 'My son, he had the basis of all knowledge and that is fear of Allāh.'" (Refer to his biography: *Tabaqāt al-Auliya'*, 280, 285, *Tabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, 83-90, *Tabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, 1/381, 389, *Sifāt al-Safwā*, 2/79-83, *Hilyatu'l-Auliya'*, 8/360, 368, *Siyar*

al-A'lām l-Nubulā', (0/339, 345.)

MUḤAMMAD IBN SĪRĪN: The Imām and Shaikh al-Islām, Abū Bakr al-Anṣārī al-Anasī al-Baṣrī, the freed slave of Anas ibn Mālīk, the companion and servant of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). He died in 110. Abū 'Uwana said: 'I saw Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn in the marketplace, and nobody saw him without him mentioning Allāh.' For his biography, refer to: Ibn Sa'd: *al-Tabaqāt*, 7/193, *Ḥīyah al-Auliya'*, 2/263, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 5/331, *Tathkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ*, 1/73, *Sīyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 4/606, *al-Ibar*, 1/135, *Mir'āt al-Janān*, 1/232, *al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah*, 9/267, *Shatharāt al-Thahab*, 1/138.

MUSLIM: Ibn al-Ḥajjāj ibn Muslim al-Qushayrī, Abū al-Ḥusain an-Naisābūrī, the *Ḥāfiẓ* and one of the great *Imāms* of this nation. He is the author of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* which is the most authentic book of ḥadīth after Bukhārī. He died in the year 261H.

AN-NASĀ'Ī: Abu 'Abdur-Raḥmān Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb ibn 'Alī al-Khurasānī The author of the famous *Sunan*, the *mujāhid* and *Ḥāfiẓ*. He was known for his strictness in grading ḥadīth narrators.

SA'D BIN ABĪ WAQQĀS: Sa'd ibn Mālīk ibn Aḥīb ibn 'Abd Munāf al-Qurashī al-Zuhri Abū Ishāq ibn Abī Waqqās. One of the ten who were promised Paradise and one whose supplications were answered. He was the last of the ten to pass away in the year 55H.

SA'ĪD BIN AL-MUSAYYAB: Abū Muḥammad al-Qurashī al-Makhzūmī: The great Imam and scholar of Madīnah and the best of the Tabi'īn in his time (d. 73). Al-Dhahabī said (*al-Sīyar*,

4/219): 'He had outstanding knowledge and application of it.' For his biography, refer to: *Hilyatu'l-Auliya'*, 2/161, *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 4/217, 246, *Tathkirat al-Huffāẓ*, 1/51, Ibn Sa'd: *al-Tabaqāt* 5/119. Ibn al-Jawzī has dedicated a two volume book for his life and virtues as mentioned in *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 21/369, and *al-Thail*, 1/418.

SUFYAN IBN SA'ID: Sufyān ibn Sa'īd ibn Masrūq al-Thawrī Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Kufī: The trustworthy Ḥāfiẓ, jurist, worshiper, Imām and proof (d. 261). He was the most ascetic person of his time to the extent that he would deprive himself of any worldly matters in his gatherings. It is said that no-one in his time feared Allāh like he did nor did anybody have his reverence of Allāh. Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī said (*Tathkirat al-Huffāẓ*, 1/206): 'The virtues of this Imām are mentioned in a full volume by Ibn al-Jawzī. I have abridged them and mentioned a fair share in my book *al-Tārikh*.' The biography of this esteemed Imām can be found in al-Hilya, 6/356-7/144, in approximately 180 pages, *Siyar al-A'lām al-Nubulā'*, 7/229, and *Tārikh Baghdād*, 9/151-174.

AT-TIRMIDHĪ: Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā ibn Sawrah ibn Mūsā ibn ad-Daḥḥāk as-Sulamī al-Tirmidhī, the Imām, Ḥāfiẓ and the author of the famous *Sunan*. He was trustworthy and precise and one of the students of Bukhārī. He died in the year 279H.

AL-ZUHRĪ: Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn 'Ubaydullāh al-Qurasahī, Abū Bakr, one of the Imāms of this nation. He was one of the most knowledgeable people of his time of ḥadīth and the Qur'ān. He was trustworthy and precise and narrated many aḥādīth. He died in the year 124H.

INDEX OF ARABIC WORDS

Awliyā': plural of *walī*; friend, ally, loyal companion. From the word *wilāyah* meaning loyalty and closeness, the opposite of enmity.

ʿAyy: withholding the tongue from speaking, carefully considering each word before it is said.

Barẓakh: barrier, isthmus, A barrier that is erected between the deceased and this life preventing him from returning and a generic reference to the life that commences after death.

Bid'ah: innovation, that which is newly introduced into the religion of Allāh.

Da'if: weak; the ḥadīth that is neither ṣaḥīḥ nor ḥasan because it fails to meet one of their requirements. It is of varying degrees of severity, the most severe of which being mawḍū', fabricated.

Dhikr: remembrance, recollection, technically referring the remembrance of Allāh.

Du'ā: supplication, invocation, it is an action of worship that may only be directed to Allāh. It is of two types, supplication through worship (*du'ā 'ibādah*) and supplication of request (*du'ā mas'alah*). The first type of *du'ā* can be understood when one understands that every act of worship is done with the unstated plea that Allāh accept that action of worship and the

desire to draw closer to him; and hence attain His pleasure. Hence every action of worship is a type of request to Allāh. The second type of *du'ā* is whereby one explicitly asks his Lord of something such as 'O Allāh! Grant me good in this world and the Hereafter.' The second type includes the first type and the first type necessitates the second type.

Ḥadīth: A text attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) describing his actions, words, descriptions and tacit approvals. It consists of two portions, the body of the text (*matn*) and the *isnād*. Rarely the term is also used to refer to a text attributed to a Companion or a *Tābi'ī*.

Ḥāfiẓ: pl. *ḥuffāẓ*. Ḥadīth Master, commonly referred to one who has memorised at least 100,000 ḥadīths.

Ḥasan: good, fair. A ḥadīth whose *isnād* is continuously linked of just, morally upright narrators but whose precision (*dabt*) falls short of the requirements of the ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth; containing no irregularity (*shādh*) and no hidden defect (*'illah*). A ḥadīth can be ḥasan in and of itself, or contain a defect but still be ruled to be so due to supporting evidences.

Iḥsān: beneficence, excellence. To worship Allāh as if one is seeing Him, and knowing that even though one sees Him not, He sees the servant.

Ikhlās: sincerity, to strip oneself of worshiping any besides Allāh such that everything one does is performed only to draw closer to Him and for His pleasure. It is to purify ones actions from any but the Creator having a share in them, from any defect or self-desire. The one who has true *ikhhlās* (*mukhlis*) will be free of *riyā'*.

ʿIlm: knowledge.

Īmān: The firm belief, complete acknowledgement and acceptance of all that Allāh and His Messenger have commanded to have faith in, submitting to it both inwardly and outwardly. It is the acceptance and belief of the heart that includes the actions of the heart and body, therefore it encompasses the establishment of the whole religion. This is why the Imāms and Salaf used to say, 'Faith is the statement of the heart and tongue, action of the heart, tongue and limbs.' Hence it comprises statement, action and belief, it increases through obedience and decreases through disobedience. It includes the beliefs of faith, its morals and manners and the actions demanded by it.

Islām: submission, submitting to the will of Allāh through following His law as revealed upon the tongue of the Messenger (ﷺ).

Isnād: support. The chain of authorities on which a narration is based, linking the end narrator of a narration to the one it is attributed to, be it the Prophet (ﷺ) or anyone else, narrator by narrator.

Istidrāj: gradually leading to a desired conclusion. Technically refers to Allāh gradually leading one who displays ingratitude to His favours to his destruction as a befitting recompense. Some of the Salaf would say, 'When you see Allāh bestowing His blessings upon you, one after the other, and you are steadfast in disobeying Him, then beware for this is *istidrāj* by which He gradually leads you to destruction.'

Ittibāʿ: following, technically referring to following the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Jābiliyyah: Pre-Islāmic Ignorance. Technically this refers to the condition of a people before the guidance of Allāh reaches them, or the state of a people that prevents them from accepting the guidance of Allāh.

Jahl: ignorance.

Kalām: speech, discourse. Technically used to refer to dialectics and scholastic theology.

Kufr: denial, rejection, hiding, technically referring to disbelief. It can be major (removing a person from the fold of Islām) or minor (not removing a person from the fold of Islām).

Majhūl: unknown. A reference to a narrator from whom only one narrator narrates (*majhūl al-'ain*) or whose state of precision (*dabt*) is unknown (*majhūl al-hāl*), such a narrator makes the *isnād qa'if*.

Ma'rifah: gnosis. Knowledge that is acted upon by the one who knows, the Gnostic of Allāh is one who has knowledge of Allāh, the path that leads to Allāh and the pitfalls of that path. He is one who knows Allāh, His Names, Attributes and Actions and then displays *ṣidq* and *ikhlāṣ* towards Allāh in all things. He works towards removing all despicable morals and mannerisms and has *ṣabr* in all of this.

Matrūk: abandoned. A narrator who is accused of lying, or makes many mistakes, or makes mistakes in aḥādīth that are agreed upon, or narrates from famous narrators that which those narrators do not know.

Munqati': that ḥadīth from which the narrator just before the Companion has been omitted from its *isnād*.

Murāqabah: self-inspection. The servant having the sure knowledge that Allāh sees him in all circumstances and knows all that he is doing, as such he does his utmost not to fall into the prohibited matters and to correct his own failings.

Mursal: disconnected. A ḥadīth whereby a *Tābi'i* narrates directly from the Prophet (ﷺ) without mentioning the Companion. In the view of the majority of Scholars it is a sub-category of *da'if*.

Mushaf: text of the Qur'ān

Qadr: Divine Decree and Destiny.

Qur'ān: The actual Word of Allāh revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) in the Arabic language through the medium of the Angel Gabriel and the greatest miracle bestowed him. It consists of 114 chapters commencing with al-Fātiḥah and ending with an-Nās.

Riyā': showing off, ostentation, an example of which lies in person beautifying actions of worship because he knows people are watching.

Sāḥih: correct, authentic. A ḥadīth which has a continuously linked *isnād*, of just, morally upright and precise narrators; containing no irregularity (*shādh*) or hidden defect (*'illah*). Hence five conditions have to be met: the *isnād* being continuously linked; the justice (*'adl*) of the narrator; the precision (*dabt*) of the narrator; its not being *shādh*; and its not containing an *'illah*. The

ḥadīth can be ṣaḥīḥ in and of itself, or it can contain a defect but still be ruled to be ṣaḥīḥ due to supporting evidences.

Salaf: predecessors. Technically used to refer to the best generations of Muslims, the first three generation: the *Ṣaḥābah*, the *Tābi'ūn* and the *Tab' Tābi'ūn* due to the ḥadīth, "The best of people are my generation, then the one that follows, then the one that follows."

Shādh: irregular, odd. A ḥadīth narrated by a trustworthy and precise narrator that contradicts the narrative of other narrators or the narration of one more trustworthy and precise than him, provided that a reconciliation is not possible.

Shirk: association, technically referring to directing a right that is due to Allāh Alone to another object of creation, either completely or partially. It can be major (removing a person from the fold of Islām) or minor (not removing a person from the fold of Islām).

Sunnah: way, path. The actions, words, descriptions, commands, prohibitions and tacit approvals of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Tābi'ūn: The generation following that of the Companions.

Tab' Tābi'ūn: The generation following that of the *Tābi'ūn*.

Tadlīs: deceit. An action of a narrator whereby he makes out that he heard something from a particular narrator what he did not hear or conceals the identity of the one he is narrating from. In order to do so, he will use terms that are vague such as 'such-and-such said' and 'on the authority of such-and-such.' The

first type of *tadlis* is blameworthy and constitutes a defect in the *isnād*. The second is dependant upon exactly what was done and the motives of the narrator, it can be blameworthy or not.

Taqwā: the basic meaning of which is setting a barrier between two things. This is why it is said that one *ittaqā* with his shield, i.e. he set it as a barrier between him and the one who wished him evil. Therefore it is as if the one who has *taqwa* (*muttaqī*) has used his following the commands of Allāh and avoiding His prohibitions as a barrier between himself and the Punishment. Hence he has preserved and fortified himself against the punishment of Allāh through his obeying Him.

Tawḥīd: unification, monotheism, the belief in the absolute Oneness of Allāh. It is to believe that Allāh Alone is the creator, nourisher, and sustainer of the worlds; it is to believe that Allāh Alone deserves to be worshipped; and it is to believe that He has unique and perfect Names and Attributes that far transcend anything that one can imagine.

Yaqīn: certainty. It is to faith (*īmān*) what the soul is to the body, it is the soul to the actions of the heart which in turn formulate the souls to the actions of the limbs and through it one attains the rank of Ṣiddīq. From *yaqīn* does *tawakkul* (absolute reliance in Allāh) sprout and through *yaqīn* is all doubt, suspicion and worry dispelled and the heart filled with love, hope and fear of Allāh. *Yaqīn* is of three levels, that which arises from knowledge (*ilm al-yaqīn*), seeing (*ain al-yaqīn*) and actual experience (*ḥaqq al-yaqīn*).